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NORTHEAST NEWS



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VOL. 46, NO. 30 TUESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2022 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

NEWS NOTES

Back-2-School First Day of Classes:

DISTRICT:	DATE:
HISD	AUG 22 MON
ALDINE	AUG 17 WED

GALENA PARK	AUG 11 THU
CHANNELVIEW	AUG 15 MON
SHELDON	AUG 17 WED

HUFFMAN	AUG 10 WED
CROSBY	AUG 11 THU
GOOSE CREEK	AUG 10 WED

BARBERS HILL	AUG 17 WED
DAYTON	AUG 11 THU

COLLEGE:	DATE:
HCC	AUG 22 MON
LONE STAR	AUG 29 MON

Free Meals for all Aldine students School Year 2022-23

A provision from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide the funding needed to allow all enrolled Aldine ISD students to eat breakfast and lunch at no charge during the 2022-2023 school year.

The money comes from the USDA's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). The CEP hails from the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which allows qualifying schools and districts in low-income areas to serve meals for free. To qualify for the CEP, 40 percent or more of the student body must be eligible for free school meals through other poverty programs. If that's the case, the entire school district becomes eligible for free breakfast and lunches.

"Aldine began offering free meals during the pandemic," said Susan D'Amico, executive director of child nutrition services. "We're pleased that this program allows us to continue offering all students access to nutritious food so they can come to class well-nourished and ready to learn."

Aldine ISD strongly

Continued. See Free Meals, Page 2

Harris County plans \$1.2 bond issue for November ballot

HOUSTON – Harris County leaders took the first step to put a \$1.2 billion bond referendum on the November 8 ballot. The proposal would devote \$100 million to public safety facilities and technology, \$900 million to roads, drainage, and transportation projects, and \$200 million to parks.

Commissioners voted 3-2 along party lines to authorize multiple county departments to develop a capital improvement bond proposal. Judge Lina Hidalgo set conditions for casting her vote with her

fellow Democrats, Commissioners Adrian Garcia and Rodney Ellis.

"The guidelines should include a 'worst-first' approach to match funds to the greatest need, with at least \$220 million to be spent in each precinct and \$100 million to be set aside for public safety," Hidalgo said.

The "worst-first" requirement addresses a concern that Commissioner Ellis raised, citing past bond initiatives where poorer neighborhoods like those in his Precinct 1 were shortchanged.

"There ought to be some money set aside, in my judgment, for those areas that have been historically neglected," Ellis said. "And one would just have to feign a lack of intelligence, or just have a total inability to see, to say that this county has been equitable in how it has spent transportation money over the last 30 years."

The language defining which specific projects the bond would fund remains uncertain.

"I do think we should have a list by the time the item goes to the voters,"

Judge Hidalgo said. "We do know that the bond would build or repair roughly 300 miles of county roads, create or improve close to 80 parks, that it would reduce flooding potential for about 13,000 residents through drainage improvements, (and) that it would improve road safety for over 20 miles of high-injury intersections. So, that's just what we got from the Budget Office."

By state law, counties must call for bond elections no sooner than 90 days before the designated election day and no later than

78 days before it. Since that window falls between Harris County Commissioners Court meetings, commissioners will need to convene a special meeting between August 12 and August 22 to take the formal vote to schedule the bond referendum.

Daniel Ramos, executive director of the Office of Management and Budget, said that if passed, the bond would cost the owner of a \$300,000 home an extra \$32 per year in taxes

Continued. See County plans \$1.2b bond issue, Page 7

Gun BuyBack takes 845 guns off Street

HOUSTON- Due to an overwhelming response from the public, the One Safe Houston Gun Buyback collected **845 firearms and distributed nearly \$100,000 in gift cards** on Saturday, July 30. As a result of the unprecedented response, the event, which began at 8 a.m. and was scheduled to end at noon, did not conclude until almost 7 p.m., when the last person col-



Officers from HPD and HCSO check guns turned in.

lected a handful of gift cards. Earlier in the day, dozens of vehicles were turned away due to demand and long lines. However, more than 150 people were given priority vouchers for a place in line at the next gun buyback. Mayor Sylvester Turner and the Houston Police Department will announce a date soon for a second event.

"We used best practices to plan and hold today's

event. I did not know what to expect, and the turnout was overwhelming," said Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner. "The turnout demonstrates there are too many guns on our streets, and people want to get them out of their possession. The gun buyback is not the only solution, but we can and will make our

Continued. See Gun BuyBack, Page 7

Eisenhower HS celebrates 50th



During Eisenhower High School's 50th Anniversary Celebration, current Eisenhower Principal Mandele Davis honored three principals who served before her. Pictured are, (l-r): former Principal Todd Lindeman, former Principal Ben Ibarra, Davis, Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney and former Principal Fred Richardson.

Russia sentences Griner to 9 years Swap or Appeal is possible

RUSSIA – Houston Native and Aldine Nimitz graduate Brittney Griner, was found guilty of drug possession and sentenced to 9 years in prison last week, as her trial ended. Although her attorneys had sought a minimum sentence, under Russian law this was one year short of the maximum 10 years possible.

However, Russia subse-

Continued. See Griner Sentenced to 9 years, p. 7



During her trial, Brittney Griner was kept in a metal cage in the courtroom. Here she displays a photo of her teammates supporting her.

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METRO HOV Lanes open Weekends for Summer

The Express Lanes that help you avoid traffic on weekdays will soon be open seven days a week as part of a regional pilot mobility program approved by METRO's Board of Directors today. HOV/HOT (Express) Lanes managed by METRO will be open on weekends beginning Saturday, July 2 through Monday, Sept. 5. This includes the Fourth of July and Labor Day holidays. Weekend and holiday operations will follow the same schedule, occupancy requirements and tolls as weekdays.

Lanes included in the pilot program run down the middle of Interstate 45, U.S. Highway 59 and U.S. Highway 290.

The lanes run in one direction, but are reversible depending on the time of day. In the mornings, vehicles travel toward downtown Houston. In the afternoons, they travel away from downtown Houston.

Toll requirements depend on the freeway, time of day and total number of people in your vehicle.

Laws of the Lanes

- * Carpools, vanpools and motorcyclists ride for free.
- * Solo drivers have the option of paying a toll to use the lanes.
- * Trailer towing is prohibited.
- * No trucks with more than two axles or a gross weight capacity of one ton or greater.
- * No bicycles (motorcycles permitted).
- * No pedestrians.

COUNTY PROVIDES \$48M FOR CHILDCARE

New program funded by American Rescue Plan funds will allocate historic \$48 million dollar investment for childcare and early childhood development

HARRIS COUNTY - June 14, 2022, In a 3 to 2 vote, commissioners court approved a new program investing \$48 million American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds for childcare and early childhood development in Harris County. It is the largest known investment of ARPA dollars by any county or city in the nation for early childhood education.

"Early childhood programs have one of the strongest returns on investment of any type of public program. Those positive effects also endure throughout the child's life, increasing their graduation rates and future earnings while reducing any possible contact with the criminal justice system," said Judge Hidalgo. "We have an obligation to go beyond just the minimum standard of funding roads and bridges and public safety. We also have an obligation to support our next generation of workers and innovators and leaders."

The program will increase accessibility to high quality childcare and early childhood development by 10% in the third-largest county in the nation. Approximately 105,000 children aged 0-3 with working parents live in a quality child care desert in which there are few or no affordable options for quality child care in their area. Due to the high cost of childcare, often one parent is forced to

stay home, preventing them from entering the workforce and costing families lost wages.

Since 2020, numerous childcare facilities have been forced to close due to the pandemic, adding burden to existing childcare deserts. This investment seeks to help childcare centers recover and stabilize financially so they can remain open while also providing childcare workers a liveable wage to help recruit and retain staff.

Judge Lina Hidalgo has led a groundbreaking effort to expand the availability of childcare and other early childhood education initiatives. Harris County invested nearly \$9 million in an Early Childhood Impact Fund, which is supporting home-based child care businesses, infant/toddler literacy, and resources for foster children.

The county also established the \$4.7 million COVID-19 Childcare Assistance Program to provide families with learning and childcare opportunities during the pandemic. With an investment of \$500,000 in ARPA funds, the county created a Child Tax Credit engagement program that brought in over \$13 million in tax credits for Harris County families. The \$20 million lead abatement program will test thousands of Harris County children for elevated lead levels and remove lead from their homes. The county has implemented best-in-class family-friendly workplace policies including 12 weeks paid parental leave, additional sick leave and resources for finding child care.

COMMUNITY
WATCH

Suspect Arrested, Charged in Fatal Shooting at 10300 Aldine Westfield Road

Charges have been filed against a suspect arrested in the fatal shooting of two men at 10300 Aldine Westfield Road about 10:05 p.m. on July 27.

The suspect, Kurt Whitten, 19, is charged with capital murder in the 337th State District Court. A booking photo of Whitten is attached to this news release.

The victims are identified as Tomas Alvarado, 26, and Jeremiah Ponce, 20.

HPD Homicide Division Sergeants K. Daignault and M. Burrow reported:

HPD patrol officers responded to a shooting call at the intersection of Aldine Westfield Road and Parker Road and found two unresponsive men lying in the roadway next to a white Honda Accord. Houston Fire Department paramedics responded to the scene and pronounced the men deceased from gunshot wounds. A preliminary investigation indicated the unknown suspect(s) fled the scene in a black pickup truck of unknown make or model.

Detectives learned an altercation occurred between the victims and a suspect a short time before the shooting. At some point, the suspect, in a black Ford F-150 pickup truck, went searching for the victims. He found them as they were traveling at the above address. The suspect fired numerous shots, fatally striking both men. The pickup truck then fled the scene.

Further investigation identified Whitten as the suspect in this case. He was taken into custody on Tuesday (Aug. 2) without incident and subsequently charged.



Kurt Whitten

Suspect Arrested, Charged in March Fatal Shooting at 6566 Homestead Road

Charges have been filed against a suspect arrested in the fatal shooting of a man at 6566 Homestead Road about 8:10 a.m. on March 20.

The suspect, Jaquel Raheem Carruth, 24, is charged with capital murder in the 180th State District Court. He is in custody out of state. A Lithonia, Georgia, Police Department booking photo of Carruth is attached to this news release.

He is accused in the death of Jhon Dias, 26.

HPD Homicide Division Detectives K. Persad and A. Grimes reported:

HPD patrol officers responded to a shooting call at a convenience store at the above address. Upon arrival, they met with Houston Fire Department paramedics and gained entry into the store. Once inside, they found the store clerk, later identified as Mr. Dias, in the back office suffering from an apparent gunshot wound. Paramedics attempted to render aid, however Dias was pronounced dead at the scene.

A preliminary investigation determined the male suspect was in the store a few days prior to the shooting. Previously released surveillance video of the incident is on the HPD YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/mSSPK5YajnM>

Further investigation and evidence from the scene identified the suspect as Carruth and determined he had entered the store with a firearm, intending to commit a robbery. As Carruth was in the process of robbing the store, he shot and killed Dias.



Jaquel Raheem Carruth

The Harris County District Attorney's Office was consulted and, on July 13, Carruth was charged with capital murder. Carruth was arrested in Lithonia, Georgia, where he remains in custody and awaiting extradition back to Harris County.

Fatal Shooting at 4901 Laura Koppe Road

The fatal shooting of a man at 4901 Laura Koppe Road about 2 a.m. today (August 2) will be referred to a Harris County grand jury.

The identity of the deceased man, 34, is pending verification by the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences.

The male shooter was not injured in the incident.

HPD Homicide Division Detectives C. Flora and J. Flores reported:

HPD patrol officers responded to a shooting at a parking lot at the above address and learned a man with gunshot wounds had been transported by Houston Fire Department paramedics to Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased.

A preliminary investigation and witness statements identified the shooter, who was detained at the scene and provided a statement. Further investigation determined the deceased man got into a verbal altercation with several persons at the location and produced a handgun. During the altercation, the shooter feared for his life and fired several shots at the man, who was struck. No one else was injured in the incident.

The Harris County District Attorney's Office was consulted and the case will be presented to a Harris County grand jury.

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AIRLINE LIBRARY NEWS

ENCHANTMENT UNDER THE SEA

We are going to have our final dive into the Summer Reading Program fun by having a party for everyone! Celebrate the end of an enchanted summer with an under the sea community dance for all ages on **Saturday, August 13th at 6pm!** There'll be music by DJ Leif Sharkington, dancing, food, crafts, photo stage, and more! Join us for our first ever dance and make it a night to remember as we ride the last wave of summer 2022.

BILINGUAL STORYTIME

Join us back in the library for storytime in English and Spanish **Wednesdays at 10:30am!**

KIDS CLUB

Kids Club is back this Wednesday, Aug. 10 at 4:30pm! Come and have some fun!

TEEN THURSDAYS

Teen Thursdays are back! Join us on **Thursday afternoons** starting

at 3:30pm.

Drop on in!

COMPUTER CLASSES

In addition to our online computer classes in both English and Spanish we will now be offering computer classes in person at the library. If you want to participate, **call us to register: 832-927-5410.**

Tuesdays:

various topics (Spanish computer class), 5-7pm, at the library

Wednesdays:

Beyond the Basics with Office 365 plus Google Apps, (English computer class), 5-7pm, online

Thursdays:

Beyond the Basics with Office 365 plus Google Apps (Spanish computer class), 5-7pm, at the library

CALL FOR LITERACY TUTORS

Would you like to be a part of making an impact on people's lives? If you are interested in becoming a literacy tutor at the Aldine Branch Library, we want to talk to you! We are looking for volunteers to teach English language classes in person and

virtually. Call 832-927-5410 or email for info: ald@hcpl.net

ADULT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you need to earn volunteer hours or are just looking for a meaningful way to spend your time? Volunteer at the library! Pick up an application at the Aldine Branch Library or call 832-927-5410.

PASSPORT SERVICES

Do have plans to travel out of the country soon? Get on the ball and make sure you get your passport in order NOW! You can make an appointment for passport services at Aldine Branch - <https://www.hcpl.net/services/passport-services>

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SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Drama teacher brings home dazzling national award

EAST ALDINE - Few public school teachers are celebrated under the bright lights of Broadway for their efforts to direct, train and inspire a new generation of talent. But Aldine ISD teacher Roshunda Jones-Koumba recently received a teaching excellence award during the national television broadcast of the Tony Awards from New York City.



She was nominated by Carver technical director Jabari Collins, who recruited her students to help make a video nominating their teacher for the

award. More than 5,000 teachers across the country were nominated for the award, which recognizes a K-12 theatre educator who has demonstrated monumental impact on their students and embodies the profession's highest standards, according to Aldine ISD.

A native of Wharton, Texas, Jones-Koumba got interested in theater during her middle school years. Although she started out as an education major at Prairie View, she quickly decided to follow her passion and switched to theater. She holds a bachelor's degree in theater and a masters' degree in administration.

For Jones-Koumba, arts education is key to keeping many students from economically underprivileged backgrounds in school. Involvement in theater and music programs raises their test scores, and allows them to go further in their education, she said.

"For students who aren't involved in athletics, arts programs are an incentive to be involved in their school community. Also, students who have been exposed to arts education have test scores that are measurably better."

"They also develop critical skills that are so important in their future lives," she said. Theater students "rarely" get stage fright during job interviews, for example.

"But they also learn critical thinking and other people skills that go a long way to serve them throughout their life," she said.

In addition to her duties at Carver, Jones-Koumba is involved with other local theater companies, including Theater Under the Stars.

Now preparing for her 20th year in Aldine ISD, Jones-Koumba has not yet decided which theatrical performances she will choose this year for her students.

"I'm still working on that," she said. — By Anne Marie Kilday



Aldine ISD Names Chief Financial Officer

Aldine Independent School District Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney has named Stanley 'Stan' Osborne the district's chief financial officer (CFO). Osborne is an experienced school finance leader taking the helm of all financial and business affairs for Aldine ISD.

Osborne will oversee the district's financial and business affairs and the execution of policies adopted by the Board of Trustees. He will provide leadership for the district's financial services activity to ensure effective management practices, serve as the chief financial and budget advisor and assume administrative responsibilities for the district's business office functions.

He joins Aldine ISD from Southside ISD, serving as the chief financial officer since 2018. Osborne directed all operations, student services, and business functions through team leadership. In his role, he served as the school bond program manager, direct supervisor of facility maintenance, construction, and real-estate manager. As a cabinet member, he served as an advisor to the superintendent.

Before serving as Southside ISD's CFO, Osborne served as director of accounting for Pasadena ISD from 2017 to 2018.

He began his career in education in 2000 in Yukon-Koyukuk School District in Fairbanks, AK, serving as chief financial officer and the chief operations officer before joining Socorro Consolidated Schools (New Mexico) in 2005, serving as executive director of finance/chief of operations. He returned to Alaska in 2009 to serve another period with the Yukon-Koyukuk School District.

While in the Yukon-Koyukuk School District and Socorro Consolidated Schools, Osborne managed large-scale projects and successfully rebuilt business office procedures and staffing to support all business functions, including directorship of nutrition services, student transportation, and facility service programs, including school bond projects. Osborne gained experience leading decisions in maintenance and opera-



New Chief financial officer Stan Osborne

tional services and all accounting activities.

In 2011, he joined Griego Professional Services as director of business services/CFO/COO. Osborne provided operational management of the accounting team, nutrition services, student transportation and registrations, and facility services programs for eight charter school locations. He ensured compliance with state and federal agencies and collected data to drive process improvements.

Osborne joined Houston ISD as assistant controller/interim controller in 2013. During his four years with HISD, Osborne was directly involved with departmental budgeting and inventory actions, a \$3 billion-dollar budget, and provided customer service support. He also served as a special project leader.

The military veteran served 13 years in the United States Air Force, where he was a decorated officer and a Director of Logistics/Resources. He holds a bachelor's degree in administration and political science from the University of Nebraska and a master's degree in administrative leadership from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. Osborne also holds a Registered Texas School Business Administrator (RTSBA) certification through the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO). He is a Texas Education Commissioner appointed Texas Education Agency (TEA) monitor/conservator.

Eisenhower High School celebrates its 50th anniversary

Fifty years is a considerable amount of time, and marks a significant portion of a person's life. Turning 50 is a milestone for many, as is 50 years of marriage.

To mark Eisenhower High School's 50th anniversary, former and current Eisenhower High students, staff, administrators, along with Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney and members of her Executive Leadership Team, gathered at the school on Monday, Aug. 1 to celebrate Eisenhower's 50th anniversary.

Joining the crowd were three former principals, Fred Richardson (who served as Ike's principal for 13 years), Ben Ibarra and Todd Lindeman, who joined current Principal Mandele Davis to share in the festivities.

Eisenhower teacher Angela Francis delivered the welcome, which was followed by remarks by Dr. Goffney.

Dr. Goffney said Eisenhower, or Big Ike as it is also known, has been an important part of the community for the last 50 years.

"Today, we not only celebrate 50 years of learning, but we are also celebrating an opportunity to come together as a community," Dr. Goffney said. "This community has a legacy, and there is so much pride in its students and school. We have many here who are students today, whose parents were students here, and whose grandparents graduated from Ike. I can tell you that I know, as Superintendent and as a parent, that every family whose had students cross these doors is that they seek the best for their children. They want the neighborhood to grow."

She added Eisenhower has changed a lot since it first opened in 1972.

"Without a doubt, Eisenhower High School has changed and grown over the years," she said. "The school is now an International Baccalaureate World School offering the rigorous and highly-valued IB Diploma Program. Eisenhower High School has so many wonderful traditions, and now that your children and grandchildren are going through the district, you are watching the impact of these traditions in your own kids."

Following Dr. Goffney's remarks, Eisenhower Librarian Allison Vaughn provided a historical perspective of Eisenhower. She shared with the audience that Julie Nixon Eisenhower, the granddaughter of school namesake President Dwight D. Eisenhower and the daughter of President Richard Nixon, attended the official dedication ceremony in November of 1972. Also in attendance were U.S. Senator John Tower, Houston Mayor Louie Welch and former Aldine ISD Superintendent W.W. Thorne. Vaughn also shared a number of highlights over the years in athletics, academics, performing arts and visual arts.

Davis then introduced Richardson, Ibarra and Lindeman and presented each with a token of appreciation for their service to the school.

She also singled out three current staff members who have spent more than 29 years serving Eisenhower students. The three were English Teacher Kelly Turner (32 years), Head Athletic Trainer Doc Nelson (30 years), and Social Studies Teacher Jeffrey Brush (29 years).

Aldine ISD PD to Host Second 'Stop the Hurt, Paint the Convert'



The Aldine ISD Police Department will offer community residents a free opportunity to assist in lowering the number of catalytic converter threats by hosting "Stop the Hurt, Paint the Convert" on Saturday, Aug. 13, at Blanson CTE High School (311 West Road).

This free event will run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Community members are encouraged to come to Blanson CTE High School on Aug. 13 and have their catalytic converters painted a bright neon color. This should help prevent

thieves from attempting to steal catalytic converters, which has become an epidemic recently in the Houston area.

All vehicles will be accepted, and participants must sign a waiver.


Time slots are available. Interested individuals should contact Aldine ISD Police Officer Ariel Holliday at 281 924-6926.

The event is sponsored by Jed's Ace Hardware and the Texas Gulf Coast Prevention Association.

★

OPINION

By U.S. Senator
JOHN CORNYN



Cornyn Bill to Prevent Child Abuse Inspired by Texan Jenna Quinn Passes Senate

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) issued the following statement after the Senate passed his *Jenna Quinn Law*, which would allow grant funds to be used to train and educate students, teachers, caregivers, and other adults who work with children in a professional or volunteer capacity on how to prevent, recognize, and report child sexual abuse. The bill is named for Jenna Quinn, a Texan and child abuse survivor, and is modeled after successful reforms passed by the Texas Legislature in 2009. **“For over a decade in Texas, Jenna’s Law has been crucial to training students, teachers, and caregivers to better identify and prevent child sexual abuse,”** said Sen. Cornyn. **“The increase in reporting of these cases is why I am proud to partner with advocates and Texans like Jenna Quinn to ensure that these resources are available nationwide, and I strongly urge the House to pass this legislation and send it to the President’s desk without delay.”**

Senators Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Mike Braun (R-IN) and Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM) joined Sen. Cornyn on the legislation. **Background:**Jenna Quinn has been an outspoken advocate for survivors of child sexual abuse and was the driving force behind what is now known as Jenna’s Law in Texas. Unanimously passed by the Texas State Senate and House, Jenna’s Law was the first child sexual abuse prevention law in the U.S. that mandates K-12 trainings for students and school staff; it was amended in 2017 to include sex trafficking prevention education in schools. More than half of all states have adopted a form of Jenna’s Law. After Jenna’s Law passed in Texas in 2009, a study found educators reported child sexual abuse at a rate almost four times greater after training than during their pre-training career. The *Jenna Quinn Law* would:

1. Authorize federal grants to eligible entities for increasing evidence-based or informed training on sexual abuse prevention education and reporting to teachers and school employees, students, caregivers, and other adults who work with children.
2. Ensure these grant recipients coordinate with local educational agencies to train students, professionals and volunteers who work with students on sexual abuse prevention, recognition and reporting.

Senator John Cornyn, a Republican from Texas, is a member of the Senate Finance, Intelligence, and Judiciary Committees.

✂

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OPINION!

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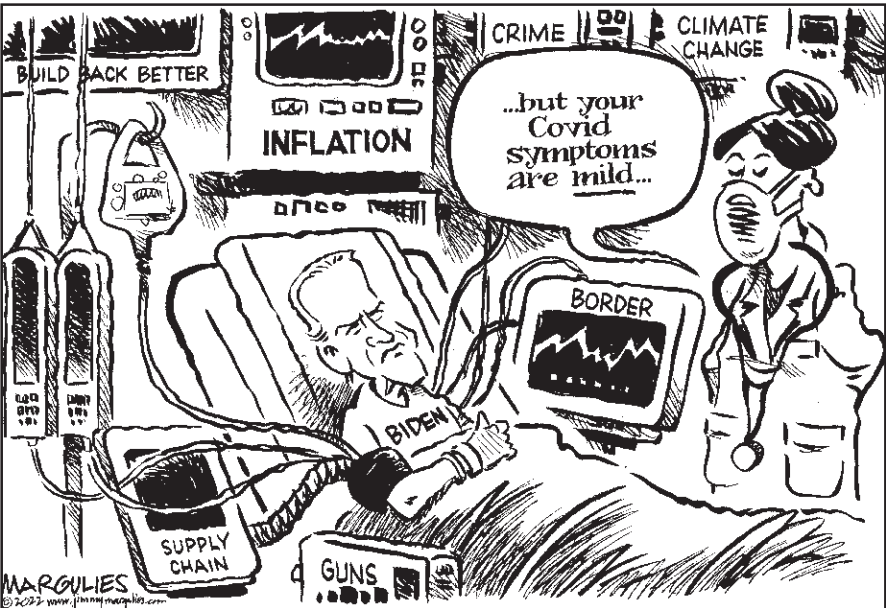
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★

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



DSHS Gets Nearly 15,000 Monkeypox Vaccines

The Texas Department of State Health Services has received and distributed 14,780 doses of the monkey pox vaccine to local health departments and DSHS regional offices. Another 27,000 doses could be made available by the Strategic National Stockpile.

The disease causes a serious skin rash with painful lesions and appears to be spreading through direct contact with the skin or saliva of an infected person. The disease is preventable by avoiding skin contact with someone who has the disease.

“Risks include having sex, kissing or hugging someone with monkeypox or sharing cups, utensils, bedding or towels with them,” according to DSHS.

Through July 29, a total of 5,189 monkeypox cases have been reported nationwide, with 351 of those in Texas. While certainly painful, monkeypox is very rarely fatal.

COMMUTING TIMES SHOW INCREASE IN STATE

When it comes to commuting to work in Texas, two items stand out. Nearly 90 percent of Texans travel alone to work, and it takes longer to get to where one’s going these days.

According to census data analyzed by the Texas Demographic Center, the number of commuters who from 2015-2020 spent up to an hour on the road getting to work stood at 17.2%, up from 15.7% from 2010-2015.

More than 95% drove a car, truck or van to work, while a scant 1.3% used public transportation, excluding taxis. Folks who walked to work totaled just 1.5% of all Texas commuters.

‘URBAN HEAT ISLANDS’ EXACERBATE SUMMER TEMPS

It’s been hot out there this summer, and cities are recording record temperatures. The Texas A&M Forest Service notes that developed areas often experience higher temperatures than rural areas.



“Areas in these micro-climates of a highly developed city, known as urban heat islands, can be up to 20 degrees warmer than surrounding areas that are more rural, according to Climate Central, a non-profit news organization that analyzes and reports on climate science,” according to the news release.

Mac Martin, with the forest service, noted planting or saving large expanses of trees in urban areas can go a long way toward cooling temperatures. Mature trees can release hundreds of gallons of water vapor daily through their leaves, cooling the air. Shaded areas can be between 20 to 45 degrees cooler than peak temperatures in unshaded expanses of concrete.

FIVE TEXAS COURTHOUSES GET RESTORATION GRANTS

The Texas Historical Commission has announced \$22.5 million in grants to five counties to aid in preservation and restoration of their historic courthouses. Four of the counties — Hall, Kimble, Upshur and Wise — received construction grants for full restoration. Comanche County received a planning grant that will be used to prepare for a future full restoration.

“We are thrilled to partner with these communities on these critical historic preservation projects,” said THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe. “Their dedication to their historic courthouses will pay economic and quality of life dividends for de-

cades.”

Throughout the state, 104 counties have received grants from the THC program, with \$350 million allotted to fund the full restoration of 78 courthouses and smaller grants to assist with planning and emergency needs given to another 26 counties.

DESPITE RAIN, FIRE DANGER REMAINS HIGH

Scattered rain in the upper Texas Panhandle, the Upper Gulf Coast and East Texas have lessened the fire danger somewhat in those areas, but the risk remains high with temperatures hovering above 100 degrees. There were 14 active wildfires as of Sunday, the largest still being the Chalk Mountain Fire in Somervell County, covering 6,746 acres and 53% contained, according to the forest service.

With 224 counties now under burn bans, officials are urging landowners to be extra vigilant about preventing fires. The Austin American-Statesman reported a spate of fires in Central Texas in recent days.

“We just want people to have a hyper sense of awareness,” Hank Jones, Williamson County Fire Marshal, told the Statesman. “We are so dry just this week alone we had a fairly large grass fire in Jarrell caused by a truck that blew a tire and when the rim hit the asphalt it created a spark that had 20 to 30 acres burning.”

Cedar trees can especially cause problems in Central Texas because they drop needles underneath that can quickly ignite. Homeowners are urged to consider limiting the use of cedar trees around their houses.

NEW COVID-19 CASES DROP IN TEXAS

The number of new cases of COVID-19 in Texas dropped in the past week to 72,653, with 154 deaths reported, about even with the previous week, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at John Hopkins University.

The number of lab-confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations rose slightly to 3,624 across the state, according to DSHS. The BA.5 variant is now prevalent in Texas and elsewhere but seems to have less serious effects, especially for people who have been fully vaccinated and boosted, according to health officials.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com

★

THE
POSTSCRIPT

By
Carrie Classon

“Lulu”

My husband, Peter, and I are back in our little place in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

Of course, it is not really “our” place. We don’t own it and have no desire to own anything here larger than a pressure cooker (yes, Peter bought one). When we arrived, Pepe at the front desk said, “Welcome home!” in English, and that is exactly how it felt: as if we had been away from home and were now returning.

A large box that had formerly held boxes of Cocoa Puffs was already in our apartment, filled with the things we had been allowed to leave behind: kitchen stuff and some art and clothing. It’s nice having our things stored for us while we are away. It is nice to have other people worry about the internet and water and electricity and watering the many plants that fill the courtyard. It’s nice having someone at the front desk who will accept packages if we have any and say “good morning!” and “good afternoon!” whenever we come and go. And, I have to admit, it is nice to have Lulu.

I’m not used to having housekeeping. But Lulu comes twice a week, and I’m getting to like it.

Of course, I wash all my dishes, and six days of the week I make my own bed. I don’t leave clutter lying about. I find myself looking nervously around the kitchen to make sure the place looks OK before she comes. But then Lulu arrives with fresh white towels and a rag mop and a bucket full of cleaning supplies, and I smile at her and say, “How are you doing today, Lulu?”

Lulu always says she is doing fine.

Lulu is an older woman, thin and somewhat severe. Her hair is pulled back into a tight bun and she wears glasses. She does not readily smile and so, when she does, it is a special treat, because I am quite sure she is not doing it for show. Getting Lulu to smile has become one of my major goals on Mondays and Thursdays.

It was a bit awkward at first. I was nervous having her in the apartment. Should I leave? Was I in her way? I’m pretty sure I made Lulu nervous, skittering around to avoid her and constantly apologizing for my existence. But this is our second stay in this apartment hotel, and we are getting used to one another, Lulu and I. Now I stay put until she lets me know when she’d like to clean the area I am currently occupying, and I tell her about all the amazing vegetables I found in the market and, when she leaves, I give her a larger tip than is, perhaps, customary.

Because I can’t think of a better person to have a little extra money than Lulu.

She always thanks me, and I thank her, and we have a moment of awkwardness, and then she is gone until the next Monday or Thursday.

And, of course, it is her job. But there is an ordinary kindness that Lulu embodies that warms my heart. She appreciates my gratitude, and I think she even enjoys my company for the short while we are together—even though my Spanish is not good and I am a little nervous around her. I think she knows I mean well, and that I appreciate her.

When Lulu is gone, the apartment smells of disinfectant soap—a pungent smell I will always associate with Mexico, a clean white bedspread, a spotless floor, and Lulu.

Till next time,
Carrie
Photos from the column and other info can be found at CarrieClasson.com.

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Back2School Community Garage sale at Buckner Family Hope Center

Buckner Family Hope Center on Aldine Mail Route held a Community Garage Sale on Saturday, July 16th. There were 28 Vendors, and all sales benefited the Buckner Teen Enrichment Academy.

- Sister-2-Sister donated food for all the families.
- Halliburton donated backpacks.
- Bucker Family Hope Center provided shoes.
- There were 150 people registered to received backpacks, lunch and shoes totally free.
- This is a annual event and kids that are part of the Buckner Center in Aldine automatically are reg-istered for the event.

Buckner Family Hope Center in Aldine would like to thanks to all spon-sors.



Buckner girls trying to buy a pair of shoes



Buckner kids poses at the Back to School event

PHOTOS BY JULIETA PAITA / NORTHEAST NEWS



Buckner Family buying shoes form one of the vendors

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Me sorprendió lo fácil que fue. Una vez que hice la llamada, el agente se encargó de todo. Fue agradable obtener los altos pagos de mi espalda. — Carlos de California

Me gustó cómo nadie me hizo sentir mal por endeudarme. Eran muy comprensivos. Todo me fue explicado y estoy trabajando hacia un lugar mejor financieramente. — Maria en Florida

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CHURCH PAGE


BIBLE TRIVIA

By Wilson Casey —
1. Is the book of Barnabas in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. Psalms 2:4, 37:13 and 59:8 are the only verses that mention God doing what? Mourning, Dancing, Laughing, Fishing
3. Shechem, Hananeel, Babel and Siloam are perhaps best described as? Temples, Towers, Wells, Harlots
4. From 2 Corinthians 7:10, what does the sorrow of

the world produce? Salvation, Truth, Anger, Death
5. Which prophet had a son named Shearjashub? Isaiah, Elijah, Nathan, Ahijah
6. What moved Noah to prepare the ark? Repentance, Godly fear, Stubbornness, An Angel

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Laughing, 3) Towers, 4) Death, 5) Isaiah, 6) Godly fear Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson's Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in bookstores and online. (c) 2022 King Features Synd., Inc.

THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

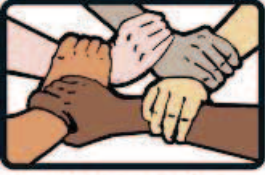


Then you will call,
and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help,
and He will say:
Here am I.


ISAIAH 58:9

"Job Praying" by Marc Chagall (1960)

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County proposes \$1.2b bond issue

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

over the life of the 25-year bond.

“This commissioners court can pass this bond initiative and still continue to cut tax rates for the foreseeable future,” said County Administrator David Berry. “If there is any added cost to a particular household, it will be because their appraisal went up.”

Commissioner Jack Cagle, a Republican, wasn’t convinced. “I always thought that debt costs something to somebody at some time,” Cagle said. “And so I don’t know that I quite buy the idea that this is free money. And I don’t think the public will either. They’ve had to tighten their belt coming out of the pandemic. They have had to tighten their belt coming after Harvey. And I think that we should do the same.”

Republican Commissioner Tom Ramsey repeated a point he had made in previous court sessions discussing the possibility of a bond referendum, arguing the process was being rushed

and was less than transparent.

“I think a bond issue in November of 2023 makes some sense. It gives us time to communicate with the constituents. It gives the constituents time to communicate with us,” Ramsey said. “But I’ll not be supporting a 2022 (bond issue), because we honestly are not ready, in my opinion, to take that to the voters.”

Commissioner Garcia, who has been leading the effort to get the bond issue on the ballot this year, responded to concerns Ramsey raised about a lack of trust among voters by saying, “The folks that I speak to also don’t have a lot of trust in Harris County because of things that were done prior to 2019,” that is, when Republicans held the majority on the court. “Precinct 2 has been largely underfunded, underserved, and roads and parks were not well funded...So, there wasn’t trust. The trust is there today.”

--Courtesy HPMedia

Gun BuyBack,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

streets safer and help reduce gun violence.”

The successful event was a collaboration between Mayor Turner, Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis, U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, and the Houston Police Department. U.S. Rep. Al Green, Council Member Abbie Kamin and other elected officials and community leaders attended Saturday’s event at Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church. Mayor Turner extended a special note of gratitude to the volunteers, Pastor Jose Ortega of NACC Disaster Services, and Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church.

“Thanks to all who made our gun buyback event such an incredible success. By all measures, it was one of the most successful gun buyback events in the nation. I commend the partnership between the City of Houston, HPD, and Harris County, who put this event together. The work continues. Tomorrow we’ll continue to roll up our sleeves and work to stop gun violence,” said Harris County Precinct One Commissioner Rodney Ellis.

The gun buyback was no questions asked and the type and working condition of the gun determined the gift card amount. HPD will check each gun collected to determine if it was stolen or used in a crime. HPD will destroy all guns that cannot be returned to their rightful owners or not considered evidence in a crime.

“I am so proud of our city. People can say what they want, but time and again, Houstonians step up with common sense and love. I thank all the men and women in uniform and the volunteers who made this day successful. I knew there would be a lot of people, but even I did not think there would be this many people the first time,” said Houston Police Chief Troy Finner.

Griner sentenced to 9 yrs,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

quently indicated by comments from Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that a prisoner swap that involved several other American and Russian prisoners might be possible. He warned the United States government that any discussions of this matter must remain private, as they develop.

The Kremlin said Friday that it’s open to talking about a possible prisoner exchange involving American basketball star Brittney Griner but strongly warned Washington against publicizing the issue.

Griner, a two-time U.S. Olympic champion and an eight-time all-star with the WNBA’s Phoenix Mercury, has been detained in Russia since Feb. 17 after police at a Moscow airport said they found vape cartridges containing cannabis oil in her luggage.

A judge convicted the 31-year-old athlete Thursday of drug possession and smuggling, and sentenced her to nine years in prison. The politically charged case comes amid high tensions between Moscow and Washington over Russia’s military action in Ukraine.

Asked at the White House Friday about the prospects of securing Griner’s release, President Joe Biden said: “I’m hopeful ... We’re working hard.”

In an extraordinary move, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke last week to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, urging him to accept a deal under which Griner and Paul Whelan, an American jailed in Russia on espionage charges, would go free.

Lavrov said Moscow was “ready to discuss” a prisoner swap but that the topic should only be discussed via a dedicated Russia-U.S. channel that Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to establish when they met in Geneva in June 2021.

“If the Americans again try to engage in public diplomacy and make loud statements about their intention to take certain steps, it’s their business, I would even say their problem,” Lavrov said. “The Americans often have trouble observing agreements on calm and professional way.”

In Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov made the same point more harshly, saying “the U.S. already has made mistakes, trying to solve such problems via ‘microphone diplomacy.’ They are not solved that way.”

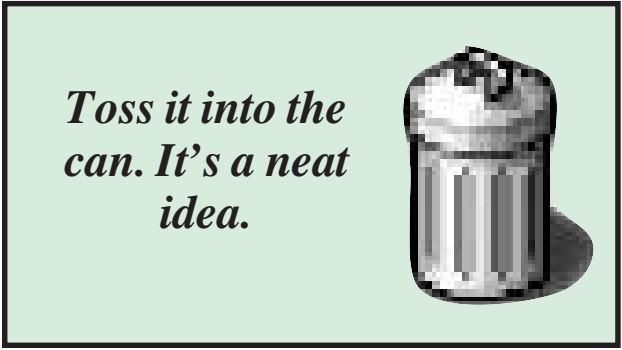
He, too, emphasized that any discussions on a possible trade should be held via the previously established confidential channels that Putin and Biden agree to during last year’s summit.

“Such mechanisms exist, but they will be thrown into doubt if the discussion continues in the public domain,” Peskov said. He said: “If we discuss any nuances related to the issue of exchange via media, no exchange will ever take place.”

People familiar with the U.S. proposal have said it envisions trading Griner and Whelan for a notorious Russian arms trader, Viktor Bout. He is serving a 25-year sentence in the U.S. after being convicted of conspiracy to kill U.S. citizens and providing aid to a terrorist organization.

The call between Blinken and Lavrov marked the highest-level known contact between Washington and Moscow since Russia sent troops into Ukraine more than five months ago, underlining the public pressure that the White House has faced to get Griner released.

On Thursday, Biden denounced the Russian judge’s verdict and sentence as “unacceptable” and said he would continue working to bring Griner and Whelan home.

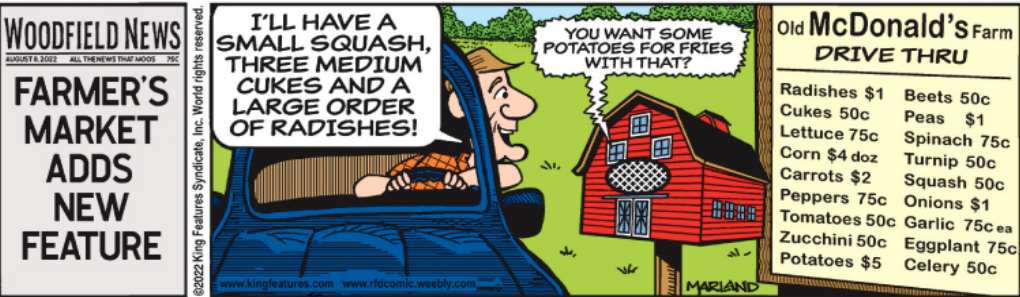


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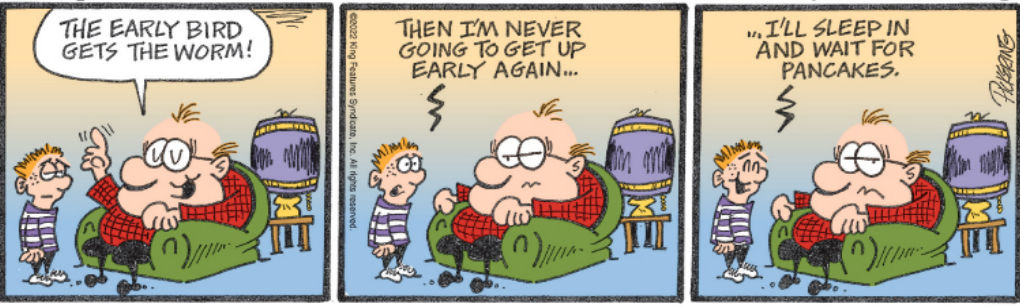
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The Spats



Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦
♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Hair is different. 2. Sleeve is shorter. 3. Bow is missing. 4. Bat is added. 5. Cap is reversed. 6. Shirt is shorter. 7. Yankee. 8. Zn. 9. Cosmo. 10. Australia.

King Crossword

August 8, 2022 Posting Date

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
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38	39	40					41					
42						43	44			45	46	47
48						49				50		
51						52				53		

ACROSS

1 Mimics
5 Satchel
8 Blue hue
12 Tibetan monk
13 Crew tool
14 Galoots
15 Spring flower
17 Marathon fraction
18 Vagrant
19 Nearsighted
21 Pie-in-the-face sound
24 Blueprint
25 San — Obispo, CA
26 Lose weight
30 Web address
31 April forecasts
32 Pi follower
33 Pained expressions
35 Egyptian deity
36 911 responders
37 Garden statuette
38 Shrimp recipe
41 Gloomy guy
42 Horseback game
43 Record holder?
48 Sharif of "Funny Girl"
49 Melody
50 Long tale
51 Theater award

DOWN

1 Jungfrau, for one
2 Standard
3 Brit. record label
4 Brazilian dances
5 Prosperous period
6 Small batteries
7 Glitch makers
8 Candy bar nut
9 Witticism
10 Wrinkled fruit
11 In — (shortly)
16 Trench
20 Orange veggies
21 Punch
22 Kitten's sound
23 Leslie Caron film
24 Snoops
26 Strategic
27 Guesser's words
28 Caprice
29 Proboscis
31 Wheelchair access
34 "Cats" show-stopper
35 Demand
37 Wrigley product
38 Espy
39 Lake of Lombardy
40 Arkin or Alda
41 Lass
44 2016 Olympics city
45 "Unh-unh"
46 Census stat
47 Non-clerical

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9	8	6	7	1	8	4	2	5
5	8	1	2	4	3	6	9	7
7	2	7	5	6	9	1	8	3
1	9	5	4	3	7	8	6	2
8	6	3	9	2	5	7	1	4
4	7	2	6	8	1	3	5	9
3	5	9	8	7	6	2	4	1
2	1	9	3	5	4	2	7	6
6	4	7	1	9	2	5	3	8

Solution time: 23 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the only vowel on a computer keyboard's middle row of letters?
- LANGUAGE: What is the diacritical mark used over the first "a" in "chateau"?
- GEOGRAPHY: What is the capital of the Czech Republic?
- MOVIES: Where was the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy filmed?
- MEASUREMENTS: What is 4 ounces of liquid equal to in cups?
- U.S. STATES: Which is the only American state that begins with the letter P?
- LANGUAGE: What is the word that stands for the letter Y in the international radio alphabet?
- CHEMISTRY: What is the symbol for the element zinc?
- TELEVISION: What is Kramer's first name in the sitcom "Seinfeld"?
- MUSIC: Which country is home to the rock group AC/DC?

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HCC named to Forbes Advisor Top 10 workforce programs

Publication cites online course variety, affordability and student experience

HOUSTON (Aug. 3, 2022) – Forbes Advisor, an independent and impartial consumer research publication, has listed Houston Community College as one of its top 10 trade schools in the nation.

The publication considered schools that offer online workforce programs. Schools named to the Top 10 scored well in categories that included credibility, accreditation, nonprofit status, affordability, student outcomes and experience and the application process. Other factors included variety of programs, average price per year and financial aid and job placement assistance.

“Houston Community College’s workforce programs confer certificates and associate of applied science degrees. (Its) programs serve students who want to enter the workforce immediately after graduation,” said Brenna Swanston, an editor on the Forbes Advisor team.

The article highlighted HCC’s programs in accounting, business management, child development, computer programming, fire science and safety, geographic information science, international business, logistics and global supply chain management, marketing and real estate.

Schools that ranked the highest were fully accredited, nonprofit institutions with relatively low net prices and access to job placement assistance—all key features of HCC.

“We are delighted with being ranked highly by Forbes Advisor,” said Dr. Michael Webster, HCC associate vice chancellor of Workforce Instruction. “It is another validation of the exceptional work our faculty and staff are doing to fulfill HCC’s mission of providing high-quality, affordable education to directly serve students seeking careers in marketable, in-demand jobs.”

HCC offers 60 online programs and 70 hybrid programs covering 80 online subjects with HCC tuition rates that are among the lowest in the U.S. The college also provides advising, counseling, ability, tutoring, proctoring, career support, student support and technical support for students.

To see the full Forbes Advisor article, visit <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/education/best-online-trade-schools>.

ABOUT HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE: Houston Community College (HCC) is composed of 14 Centers of Excellence and numerous satellite centers that serve the diverse communities in the Greater Houston area by preparing individuals to live and work in an increasingly international and technological society. HCC is one of the country’s largest singly accredited, open-admission community colleges offering associate degrees, certificates, workforce training and lifelong learning opportunities. To learn more, visit hccs.edu.



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 - Auto Body/Collision Repair
 - **Bilingual AC Technician I & II (new)**
 - Cosmetology
 - Certified Nurse Aide (CNA)
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 - Microsoft Office Technology Specialization
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 - Petroleum Technician
 - Police, Fire, & EMS
 - Welding & Bilingual Welding
 - Air Conditioning Technician I & II
 - Plumbing Technician I & II

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Northline Campus | 8001 Fulton Street | Houston, TX 77022
North Forest Campus | 6010 E. Little York Road | Houston, TX 77016
Northeast Campus | 555 Community College Drive | Houston, TX 77013
Automotive Tech. Training Center | 4638 Airline Drive | Houston, TX 77022

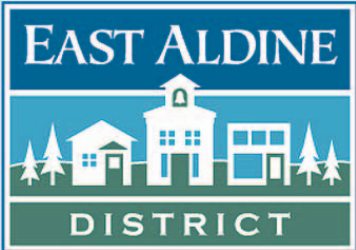
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hccs.edu/fall22



Scan for steps on how to get started!



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East Aldine District COMMUNITY NEWS

District and civic club shine more light on public safety

The East Aldine Management District’s latest way of stepping up to improve public safety is by funding a second set of streetlights, and an estimated \$150,000 in electricity costs this year, in areas that sorely needed the service.

The District had an important partner. The “Light Up East Aldine” project is due in large part to the efforts of the Green Forest Civic Club and its youthful president Ruben Salazar. He is a soft-spoken, 21-year-old political science major at the University of Houston Downtown and a lifelong resident of East Aldine.



Marina Flores And Ruben Salazar.

Salazar, who said he was “almost too shy” to make class presentations while attending MacArthur High School, was recently elected County Precinct 2 chair of the Harris County Democratic Party. By going door-to-door to talk to his neighbors in the Oakwilde subdivision, Salazar has overcome his fear of public speaking and helped the civic club add new members. He was one of many East Aldine residents who recently testified in Austin to the Sunset Advisory Commission about the need to toughen Texas Commission on Environmental Quality regulations.

The Green Forest Civic Club represents Oakwilde, Eastex Freeway Forest and Fairgreen 1, 2, 3 and 4 subdivisions. But all residents of the East Aldine area are welcome to attend its meetings.

Salazar credits Club Secretary Marina Flores for sparking his interest in the organization because she started a community survey about residents’ concerns and desires for their neighborhoods.

“Streetlights were the number one concern, followed closely by sidewalks,” Salazar said.

Many residents concerned about crime in their neighborhoods consider streetlights a way to reduce lawlessness because they make it harder for potential crooks to hide, Salazar said.

Northeast Houston neighborhoods inside city limits routinely get streetlights. But East Aldine is outside city boundaries.

Salazar has met with many elderly residents in the unlit sections who are repeat victims of crime.

“We are here for those residents,” Salazar said. “So, we decided to approach the East Aldine Management District for some help.”

The District approved funding for 105 streetlights in October 2021. But CenterPoint, which installs them, was able to find only 68 suitable locations.

Now the District has dedicated more money — about \$110,000 — for as many as 223 more lights.



NEXT PLANNED LIGHT LOCATIONS



“We are very grateful to the District for funding these streetlights,” Salazar said.

Streetlights and other safety programs enhance the District’s anti-crime efforts, which include hiring patrol deputies to work overtime shifts in the neighborhood.

“This is something the District can do to make the streets safer,” District Executive Director Richard Cantú said of the streetlights.

In a posting on the civic club’s Facebook page, Salazar explained: “This new round of streetlights will be focused towards lighting up the southern portions of the district, especially those neighborhoods around Worsham Elementary and Orange Grove Elementary Schools.”

“We have been conducting surveys and collecting letters of concern to raise awareness about the need for an increase in streetlights.

— by Anne Marie Kilday