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NORTHEAST NEWS



Walle Town Hall on Concrete Plants
Shown with Rep. Walle at the Town Hall last Thursday were this group of local residents, discussing legislation to regulate the Concrete Batch plants in Aldine.

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NEWS NOTES

Reimagine Aldine Mail Route with Pct. 2 on Feb. 18

You are invited to join a planning meeting to share your thoughts and ideas about the future of Aldine Mail Route. Meeting Tuesday, Feb. 18 from 1pm to 3pm at the East Aldine Offices, 2909 East Aldine Amphitheatre Drive. Sponsored by Pct. 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia..

Small Business Seminar Feb. 27

East Aldine District Small Business Free Seminar Luncheon Series continues, with the subject 2025 Tax Updates. Speaker: Keiith Cothral, Houston Tax Attorney. The Seminar this month is cosponsored by the Greater Northside Chamber. Thursday, Feb. 27 from 12pm to 1:30pm at the East Aldine Offices, 2909 East Aldine Amphitheatre Drive, off Aldine Mail Route.

Aldine ISD School Board Meeting Feb. 25 to discuss Closings

The Aldine ISD School Board Trustees will meet on Tuesday, February 25 at the Administration Building, 2520 W.W.Thorne Blvd. Houston 77073 at 7pm. The Agenda includes possible school closings and low performing schools.

“Gateways” planned for East Aldine

Community participates in planning meeting

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

The Aldine area is about to get fancy. Carlos Silva, the chairman of the East Aldine Management District and the chairman of the East Aldine Arts Council has a vision—to bring public art to the area.

“Today is a super important day as one of the processes for this big undertaking to create these gateways in East Aldine,” he said.

He explained the vision.

“What we’re doing is taking three major intersections that are entry points to East Aldine, and we want to completely



Aldine Westfield @ N Sam Houston Pkwy E



Carlos Silva, chairman of the East Aldine Management District, points to some of the samples for residents to choose from at the planning meeting for the Gateways Project.



Ella Quiles is one of the co-founders of UP Art Studio and works as consultant and implementer.

turn them into a work of art,” he explained. When asked why, his answer was simple.

“We want to stand out. We want to give something interesting for the community here to have, to feel proud of, and attract people to the district,” he said.

He also pointed out that visitors spend money, and the attraction could also boost the economy, welcome news to business owners.

The project will not only include the columns under the overpass, but the entire apron that leads up to the overpass and down.

“It will be quite the undertaking,” he said. “It’s really kind of a bit of a construction project, even though all we’re doing is using paint, but we also intend to use lighting that

Continued. See GATEWAYS TO EAST ALDINE, Page 8

Walle Town Halls discuss Legislature, Concrete Plants

EAST ALDINE – Since the start of the 89th session of the Texas Legislature, Representative Armando Walle has held two Town Halls to inform his constituents on issues of interest to residents in his District 140.

On Thursday, January 30 Walle held a Zoom meeting on the internet, of which about 30 persons participated. The main topic of the discussion was the working of the Texas government, and the 89th Legislature.

On Thursday, February 13 Walle held an in-person

meeting at BakerRipley, to discuss active bills before the Legislature, and especially those dealing with regulations of Concrete Batch Plants. About fifty persons attended this meeting, many concerned about concrete plants in their residential neighborhoods, or their trucks travelling down nearby residential streets.

In the first session, Walle explained that the Legislature would meet for 140 days, and complete

Continued. See WALLE TOWN HALLS, Page 2



A large group of Aldine residents met last Thursday at BakerRipley, to hear about Walle’s proposed legislation to regulate Concrete Batch Plants near residential areas.

STATE OF THE STATE: Abbott calls for Texas to be “Guardians of Freedom”

By David Taylor
Managing Editor



Texas Governor Greg Abbott

From the headquarters of the Arnold Oil Company in Austin, Texas governor Gregg Abbott issued his annual State of the State address looking back to accomplishments and successes in 2024 and outlining the plan for the future of the state.

The 85-year-old business supplies auto products, lubricants, power equipment, and much more.

“The Texas economy is thriving because of Arnold Oil and thousands of businesses like it,” Abbott said.

“Texas is the most powerful economy in America.

Ranked as the best state for doing business for 20 years, Texas is No. 1 for the most new jobs, No. 1 for economic development, and No. 1 as the best state to start a new business. We rank No. 1 for technology and innovation and No. 1 for semiconductors that power the things you use every day,” he told the crowd assembled for the

speech.

Last year, the governor created a Space Commission to boost space exploration in Texas, from NASA, to SpaceX, to Blue Origin, and beyond. They also added new business courts to swiftly deal with complex business litigation.

“Business is booming so much that we now have our own stock exchange, the Texas Stock Exchange. It will make Texas the financial capital of America,” he added.

To ensure prosperity reaches every Texas family and business, he created the Small Business

Continued. See STATE OF THE STATE, Page 5

Area growth calls for new Area Code 621

By David Taylor
Managing Editor



With the advent of the burner phone, the use of multiple phones now by individuals more and more, the increase for phone numbers has increased.

The influx of new residents into the Houston metro area and the demand for more and more phones has resulted in the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) to approve an additional area code for the region. The new 621 area code will encompass the greater Houston metropolitan area and surrounding communities such as Baytown, League City, Missouri City, Pasadena, Pearland, Sugar Land, and The Woodlands and will encompass Harris, Austin,

Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto, and Waller Counties.

According to the PUCT, the new area code began on Jan. 23, 2025, while existing area codes, 281, 346, 713, and 832 will remain in use.

Telephone customers requesting a new phone number in the 281/346/713/832 area code overlay region may be assigned a number beginning with 621. Whether they’re requesting new service, adding a line, or in some

Continued. See NEW AREA CODE, Page 5

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East Aldine District seeks candidates for two vacant board positions

Board Seeks Candidates for Vacant Positions No. 4 and 5

January 31st, 2025 | About the District, Community

The Nominating Committee of the Board of Directors of the East Aldine Management District seeks qualified candidates to fill the vacancies that exist in Director Positions No. 4 and 5 of the board. Statutory qualifications as defined in Chapter 375, Local Government Code, are as follows:

Sec. 375.063. QUALIFICATIONS OF DIRECTOR. To be qualified to serve as a director, a person must be at least 18 years old and:

- (1) an owner of property in the district;
(2) an owner of stock, whether beneficial or otherwise, of a corporate owner of property in the

district;

(3) an owner of a beneficial interest in a trust that owns property in the district; or

(4) an agent, employee, or tenant of a person covered by Subdivision (1), (2), or (3).

The Board of Directors meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 6 pm at the East Aldine District's Town Center community room. Candidate must be willing to participate in the Board's regular meetings and serve on at least one committee. The term of Position 5 expires June 1, 2027, and is renewable for an additional four-year term upon recommendation of the Board and approval by the Harris County Commissioners Court. Currently there are no limits on the number of terms a director may serve.

If you are qualified or know someone who is qualified and may be interested, please submit your resume and the application to the Nominating Committee by Friday, February 28, 2025 to the following:

East Aldine Management District Nominating Committee c/o Monica Campos 2909 E. Aldine Amphitheatre Dr., Ste. 200 Houston, TX 77039

Or by email to: mcampos@haweshill.com

Download the Candidate Information Form (PDF)



Walle Town Halls,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

their work by June 2nd, unless the governor called a special session after that.

Walle explained how the Legislature operated on a seniority basis, and that he was now 18th in longevity among the 150 total members of the House.

Walle said that he works well with both parties, and supports the new Speaker Dustin Burrows. Walle recently learned that his committee assignments include appropriations, and licensing and administrative procedures committees.

Walle has filed 30 bills so far, he said, and expects to file a total of 40. Five of these bills involve regulation of Concrete Batch Plants, and during his Town Hall at BakerRipley he explained in detail how these would involve per-

mitting and regulating these industries.

Other issues that he is concerned with include child nutrition, noise ordinance, and child care.

The Biennial Budget, which covers the next two years, will amount to about \$334 Billion dollars, Walle said. These is a surplus of about \$20 Billion at the disposal of the Legislature, as well as the normal budget items. The main items that "drive" the budget figures are Healthcare, and Public Education, which includes K-12 and college.

The main issue involving Education in this session is whether there will be a Voucher bill, where public dollars are available for families to send their children to private schools. Governor Abbott is insisting that this bill be passed,

after failing to approve it in the last legislature session. The bill as now written would set aside \$10,000 per student to be used for private or public enrollment. To be more acceptable, Abbott is proposing vouchers for private schools, and an increase in public school funding.

The Legislature is also dealing with border security, and stopping the influx of undocumented immigrants. This issue is especially important to Walle, he said, because his own family is a mixed status, with only some having citizenship. This status is common in Aldine, he said, and is especially concerning since President Trump is enforcing the deportation of undocumented im-

migrants.

In the Q&A sessions that followed the presentations, residents asked about deportations, and whether there were any mass raids or roundups in the area. Walle said he did not know of any, only arrest of known criminal immigrants.

Questions were asked about the possible closing of Aldine schools in the area, and Walle said he was opposed to any closing, and hoped the Aldine ISD would find other means to fund their deficit. Presently the local Olesin elementary is on the list of 7 possible school closings. The Aldine ISD Trustees have scheduled a February 25 meeting to discuss and vote on these closings.

E. Little York House destroyed with \$160,000 damage

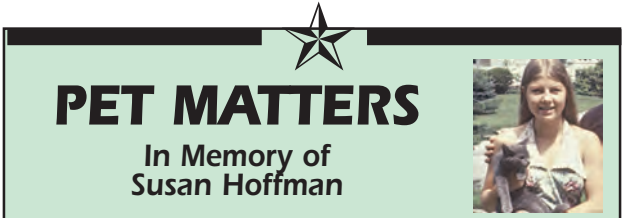
Houston Fire Department reports a House Fire in the East Little York / Homestead Area on January 20, 2025, at 1:26 p.m. at the 11400 block of Lemond Dr. 77016.

There were No reported injuries.

Fire Department reports \$32,700 in estimated property saved, but \$160,000 in estimated damage.

The cause was listed as Accidental (electrical - extension cord).

Firefighters arrived on scene to find heavy smoke coming from a 1-story house and made an offensive attack. A primary search was completed, and the utilities were secured, with a breaker found tripped. Crews controlled and extinguished the fire and requested HFD Arson investigators to determine the cause and origin. 40 personnel responded to this incident, including firefighters from Stations 32, 15, 34, 45, 43, 56 and 30.



My neighbor yells at her dog. Is it abuse?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: Every morning, my next-door neighbor walks her dog past my house. Every morning, she berates her dog, calling him an idiot and a bad dog, especially after picking up his poo. I cannot see the dog doing anything wrong, so I don't know why she's constantly yelling at him. I know it's affecting him, though — he has his tail between his legs most of the time. Is there anything I can do for that dog? — Bill in Oshkosh, Wisconsin

DEAR BILL: That's hard to watch — emotional abuse can be as damaging to an animal as physical abuse.

Strong verbal correction is OK in obedience training when you need a dog to stop doing something immediately. But it should be limited to a firm "No!" and a quick tug on the leash if necessary — followed by proper corrective training.

When an owner simply berates the dog and takes out their anger verbally on them, it isn't training.

It doesn't correct their behavior. Behavioral issues often get worse, not better. And the mixed signals and negative feedback that the dog constantly receives can cause trust issues that never fully go away.

What can you do as an outside observer? Rescuers or animal control likely won't intervene in a simple case of yelling at a dog.

If you feel safe talking to the owner, try starting a conversation with them. You may be able to glean more info about why they are yelling at the dog, and you might be able to give training advice.

However, you should also observe and document the situation. Write down the dog's physical condition and behavior and note if they deteriorate. If you see physical abuse from the owner, note the date, time and place and, contact animal control.

Send your tips, comments or questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

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AIRLINE LIBRARY NEWS. Echoes of Resilience: The Story of Freedmen's Town. de cuento con manualidades. Open Tech Lab (Bilingual). Houston Music Jam: Black History Month Edition. Pajama Jam Story Time. Self-Care Sessions. Michelle Pichon Library Program Specialist Harris County Public Library

SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Aldine ISD Student-Athletes Shine on National Signing Day



Hard work, dedication, and perseverance—these qualities define the remarkable student-athletes of Aldine ISD. On February 5th, the district celebrated National Signing Day, a momentous occasion where student-athletes officially took the next step in their academic and athletic journeys. Surrounded by proud family, friends, coaches, and teammates, these young men and women signed their letters of intent, proving that commitment in the classroom and on the field leads to incredible opportunities.

This year, Aldine ISD had 18 talented athletes from across the district sign to compete at the next level. Each of these students has demonstrated the discipline and resilience it takes to balance academics and athletics, showcasing what it truly means to be a student-athlete.

- MacArthur High School**
 - Aijalek Silvers – Football – Butler Community College
 - LaShae Goffney – Volleyball – University of Texas – Dallas
 - Refugio Sandoval – Cross Country/Track – University of St. Thomas
 - Isaiah Macias – Cross Country/Track – University of St. Thomas
 - Miranda Machado – Softball – Arlington Baptist University
- Nimitz High School**
 - Ke'lyn Washom – Football – University of Wyoming
 - Javar Thomas – Football – Texas Southern University
 - Rayon Bynum – Football – Texas Southern University
 - Jonathan Doomes – Football – Capital University
- Aldine High School**
 - Keishon Wiser – Football – Trinity Valley
 - Dereon Williams – Football – Blinn College
- Davis High School**
 - Drake Williams – Football – New Mexico State
 - Nicolaus Chenevert – Football – Lamar University
 - Edward Lopez – Football – Henderson State
 - Cortez Hughes – Football – Lane College
 - Gary Hector – Football – Texas College
 - Treymane Grey – Football – Texas College
 - Gideon Scott – Football – Texas College

These signings are more than just a commitment to play at the next level; they represent years of dedication, early morning workouts, late-night study sessions, and the unwavering support of families, coaches, and mentors. Each of these athletes has set an example that hard work pays off, and that being a well-rounded student-athlete opens doors to success beyond high school.

As these students prepare to embark on their college journeys, they carry with them the legacy of Aldine ISD—one of determination, resilience, and excellence. Their achievements serve as a testament to future generations that with passion, discipline, and a commitment to academics, anything is possible.

Congratulations to all our National Signing Day athletes! The Aldine ISD community is proud of you and can't wait to see you succeed at the next level!

Aldine ISD Students Travel to Washington, D.C., for the Presidential Inauguration



Aldine ISD students at the airport headed to Washington, D.C., on January 16, 2025.



Civic Engagement Ambassadors: Roman Paredes, Yoselin Hernandez, Lacinda Gonzales-Hernandez, and Christopher Morales Gonzalez at a Tress for Houston event.

Over 40 Aldine ISD high school students will get the opportunity to attend the presidential inauguration on January 20, 2025. The students, Aldine's Civic Engagement Department, and Aldine staff, will travel to Washington, D.C. on Thursday, Jan. 16, for a momentous experience.

The Civic Engagement Department partnered with the nonprofit Close Up, founded in 1971, which has partnered with schools nationwide, aiming to help young people understand and experience their government. Students with a packed itinerary will spend seven days and six nights in the nation's capital. Students will see the inaugural address, engage in important government discussions, explore famous monuments, memorials, and museums, and make lasting friendships. For some Aldine students this will be their first time leaving out of Houston and even going on a plane.

Roman Paredes, a senior at MacArthur High School, is eager about the trip and the government knowledge he'll obtain.

"This is an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that I am extremely grateful to have been given," Paredes said. "I hope to gain more experience on how to have civil interactions when discussing politics, as well as the potential to meet new people with motives similar to mine."

The students represent six Aldine high schools: Aldine HS, Blanson CTE



Daniel Meza, the civic engagement specialist, with students at Blanson CTE.

HS, Davis HS, Eisenhower HS, MacArthur HS, and Victory Early College HS. They were selected to participate in the trip based on their involvement in the Civic Engagement Department and started as a pilot program at MacArthur and Aldine HS. The ambassador program aims to get young people involved in their community through outreach, volunteering, and voting.

Paredes said he doesn't take the trip lightly and feels proud to represent Aldine in Washington, D.C.

"This opportunity benefits all Aldine students and Aldine ISD as a

whole by allowing for the representation of our otherwise overlooked community in the greater Houston area," he said.

Daniel Meza, the civic engagement department specialist, said students have shown great excitement

about being in the program and all the skills they are gaining.

"A positive outcome of this program is that the students share their experiences with their parents, peers, and others in their network," he said.

"It is getting more people interested and primed to participate, and I'm hoping the student's experience in D.C. will continue to heighten others' curiosity about Civic Engagement."



OPINION PAGE

OPINION
By **BILL KING**



Birthright Citizenship

Since the adoption of the 14th Amendment in 1868, the United States has recognized birthright citizenship; that is, if a person is born on U.S. soil, that person is a U.S. citizen regardless of the citizenship of their parents. In one of his first official actions, President Trump issued an executive order that instructed U.S. officials to no longer recognize birthright citizenship. The essence of the order is that children of parents who are in the U.S. illegally will not be recognized as citizens. His order was met with immediate outcry from immigration advocates and was immediately challenged in numerous lawsuits, one of which has already resulted in a temporary stay of the order. A bill has also been introduced in Congress with similar effect.

While many have predicted the courts will summarily strike down the order, the issue is quite complicated and nuanced, and the outcome may not be as clear as many predict. It seems likely the issue will ultimately land in the Supreme Court, which was probably Trump's intention in issuing the order.

Soil or Blood

Countries throughout the world recognize two fundamental doctrines of citizenship: jus soli (Right of Soil) and jus sanguinis (Right of Blood). Right of Soil recognizes citizenship based solely on where the person was born. Its origins are the feudal concept that loyalty to the lord and, ultimately, the sovereign being bound up with the land. Right of Blood recognizes citizenship based on the nationality of the child's parents and traces its origins to Roman law. From my review, it does not appear that any country strictly uses jus soli or jus sanguinis. Rather, all countries incorporate some elements of each.

However, on a continuum of the two doctrines, the U.S. would be far toward the jus soli end compared to most of the world. This is fairly typical of countries that outlawed slavery in the 19th century, especially those in the Western Hemisphere. At that time, those countries were faced with dealing with the citizenship status of a large number of former slaves. Many of those countries, like the U.S., adopted constitutional amendments that broadly gave citizenship to former slaves born in their countries. In the U.S., the 14th Amendment was enacted to overrule the U.S. Supreme Court case of Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857), which held that African Americans, free or enslaved, could not be U.S. citizens.

There are two questions we must face in addressing this issue. The first is a legal one. Can a President or Congress overturn a doctrine recognized in the U.S. for over a century by executive order or legislation? The second issue is whether an extreme reliance on the jus soli doctrine is the best policy for the country.

Legal Arguments on Birthright Citizenship

The legal question turns to the interpretation of Section 1 of the 14th Amendment. It provides:

"All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and the State wherein they reside." (Emphasis added.)

The crux of this issue is the interpretation of the clause "subject to the jurisdiction thereof." Clearly, the phrase is intended to limit the grant of citizenship based on the birthplace in some way. However, the phrase "subject to the jurisdiction thereof" is hardly precise. During the debates surrounding the adoption of the 14th Amendment, the framers of the amendment appear to have been referring to Indian tribes because of their semi-autonomous status and children born to foreign diplomats or foreign militaries during their residency in the U.S.

I was unable to find any discussion at the time of the issue of children of parents in the U.S. without legal authority. However, the U.S. needed labor at that time for its rapidly expanding economy and frontier. It was relatively easy to come to the U.S. and apply for citizenship. In fact, legislation like the Homestead Act (1862) actively encouraged immigration. So, the issue of citizenship for emigrants who had come to the U.S. in violation of its laws was likely not on the minds of any of those drafting the amendment.

The issue of whether a child born in the U.S. of parents who were not U.S. citizens was first considered by the U.S. Supreme Court in *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* in 1898. Ark was the child of two Chinese immigrants who had settled in San Francisco but never became U.S. citizens. After residing in San Francisco for over twenty years, his parents returned to China in 1890. The parties stipulated that Ark's parents were Chinese citizens at all times.

In 1895, Ark traveled to China. When he returned, he was detained by customs officials seeking to enforce provisions of the Chinese Exclusion Act, passed in 1882. The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed during a period of rampant anti-Chinese sentiment in the U.S. and, particularly, in California. It expressly forbade any Chinese immigrant who left the country from returning. However, U.S. citizens were excluded. Therefore, whether the Act applied to Ark and whether he could return to the U.S. after he visited China turned on whether he was a U.S. citizen.

In a 6-2 decision, the Supreme Court ruled in Ark's favor, broadly declaring that the jus soli doctrine was required by the 14th Amendment and narrowly interpreting the "subject to the jurisdiction" qualifier. In reaching the decision, the majority relied heavily on English common law, which was rooted in the feudal system.

However, in a dissent, Justices Fuller and Harlan argued that the English common law did not bind the U.S. They contended that the standard was obsolete, especially in America, which was the antithesis of feudal society. According to Fuller and Harlan, "(n)ationality is essentially a political idea and belongs to the sphere of public law." Their dissent implies that Congress is Constitutionally allowed to define the limits of what it means to be subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

Whether the Ark case can be read as an absolute prohibition on Congress more broadly defining what the "subject to the jurisdiction" phrase includes or, more narrowly, only holds that Congress went too far in the Chinese Exclusion Act seems to be an open question. This is an excellent discussion of the issue by two highly respected legal scholars.

It is somewhat ironic that today's progressives are flocking to the majority view in Ark. Justice Harlan is known as a liberal dissenter of the Supreme Court of that era when the Court primarily supported the status quo. When reading the two opinions, I thought the dissent reflected more contemporary views and values than the majority opinion.

I do think it is important to note that the Supreme Court would not have to overtly overrule Ark to uphold Congress' authority to redefine the limits of birthright citizenship. Ark is clearly distinguishable on numerous facts, most notably that Ark's parents were legally in the U.S. at the time of his birth.

But even if recognizing that Congress has the authority to define the "subject to the jurisdiction" clause required overruling Ark, the current Court has shown little reluctance to overturn long-standing precedents. The bottom line is I think the legal outcome of whether Congress could change the standard could go either way.

Of course, even if Congress has the right to limit birthright citizenship, there is still the question of whether a president can do so by executive order. In the case where Congress has failed to act, does the President have the right or authority to give direction to his administration in the absence of any direction from Congress? That seems to be much more of a stretch to me. Still, I have been amazed by the courts' deference to regulatory authority in the last few decades, so I would not rule out the possibility that the courts might ultimately uphold his order.

Policy Considerations

Setting aside the legal issue, is birthright citizenship a good policy for the U.S.? I think the proponents for it have a harder time here.

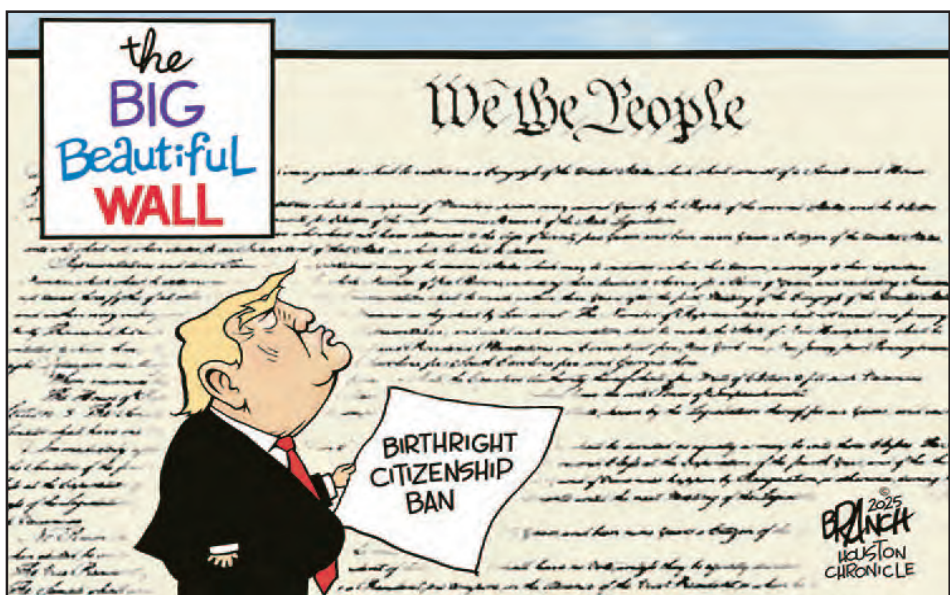
First, such a policy encourages prospective mothers to come to the U.S. illegally to obtain citizenship for their children. While most of us can sympathize with a mother aspiring to give the great gift of American citizenship to her child, nonetheless, that does not seem like a rational way to dole out citizenship. Certainly, it is easy to imagine a rational immigration legal structure that would encourage the type of immigration the U.S. needs while also screening those that would cause harm or become a burden to our country. It is easy to imagine such a functioning immigration system because such systems exist in much of the rest of the world.

One of the serious difficulties in changing our policy would be the transition and the administrative and litigation nightmare that would ensue. For example, there are literally millions of people in the U.S. who believe they are citizens by virtue of being born here, and the government has treated them as such for decades in many cases. Suddenly, stripping those individuals of their citizenship would likely ruin afool of the Constitution's prohibition of ex post facto laws, in addition to being profoundly unfair. Trump's executive order avoids this problem by restricting it only to children born 30 days after its issuance.

Both Trump's executive order and the pending legislation provide that if one of the parents is a citizen, the child will be as well. How exactly would it be determined if the father was a U.S. citizen? Who would have the burden of proof? Will we run DNA tests on every child born to determine their heritage? Can you imagine the number of lawsuits that would be filed over that? At a minimum, a massive new federal bureaucracy would be required to determine citizenship claims.

Adopting a rational immigration system that included better criteria for granting citizenship would greatly benefit our country. Many of the issues surrounding birthright citizenship are the legacy of the inability of Congress to enact such a system. I wish I believed Trump's executive order might spur a thoughtful debate and legislative action in that direction. But sadly, our representatives from both sides of the aisle seem more interested in demagoguing immigration than working together to enact a rational system.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Opinions expressed here are not necessarily that of this newspaper or its staff. YOUR OPINION is welcome. Send a letter for possible publication to Grafikpress Newspapers, 5906 Star Lane, Houston TX 77057 or an email to GRAFIKSTAR@aol.com. Please limit your words to about 200. Letters will be subject to editing. Thank you.



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By **Gary Borders**



Voucher Bill Passes Senate, Arrives in House

A bill to implement school vouchers in Texas sailed through the Senate largely on party lines last week and now awaits consideration in the House, the Austin American-Statesman reported. House Speaker Dustin Burrows, R-Lubbock, said he believes there are enough votes in that chamber to pass the legislation, which was defeated a half-dozen times in 2023 by a coalition of Democratic and rural Republican members. "As Speaker, I'm committed to ensuring the agenda of the Texas House remains truly member-driven this session," Burrows said in a statement. "I support empowering parents to decide the best educational option for their children." The bill's supporters, which include Gov. Greg Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and other top elected officials, say it would give students access to more school choices. Opponents fear the \$1 billion program will siphon funding and students away from public schools already facing budget deficits. The political director of the Texas Freedom Network said legislators should focus on funding public schools instead. "Voucher schemes steal vital funds from kids in our neighborhood schools, all so megadonors and the politicians in their pockets can subsidize private and religious schools for the wealthy at our expense," Rocio Fierro-Pérez said.

ABBOTT OUTLINES HIS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Abbott outlined his legislative priorities in a speech last Sunday. Besides school vouchers, he wants state lawmakers to cut property taxes by \$10 billion, launch a massive water project to ensure adequate supplies, and restrict bail for a number of crimes, the Houston Chronicle reported. Other priorities include pay raises for teachers and investment in nuclear energy as a way to "fortify" the state's electric grid. Abbott is backing a plan by state Sen. Charles Perry, R-Amarillo, which would invest in several large projects to increase the state's water supply. Among the projects are desalination plants and a network of pipelines to distribute water. "We will make the largest investment in water in the history of Texas," Abbott said. "We will tap into new water supplies and repair pipes to



save billions of gallons of water each year." The Democratic response to Abbott's State of the State address blasted the governor for being too friendly with President Trump and billionaire Elon Musk, who is leading an effort to eliminate federal government waste and inefficiency. "The fact is people are struggling after 30 years of Republican rule," Gilberto Hinojosa, the former Democratic Party chair, said in the response.

DAIRY, POULTRY PRODUCERS GRAPPLE WITH BIRD FLU

By now, most everyone has noticed the steep rise in the price of eggs, which is being blamed on the spread of avian flu, first detected in a flock of pheasants in Erath County nearly three years ago. The Texas Standard Reported. "It's a supply-and-demand issue," said J.C. Essler, executive vice president of the Texas Poultry Federation. "When we're putting multiple flocks down, and our layer operations can be up to a million birds, you're taking a substantial supply out of the market." Thus far in Texas, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have confirmed 14 cases of bird flu at poultry farms, only one of which was at a large-scale farm with 2 million chickens. There have been 27 confirmed cases at Texas dairy farms. The potential economic impact could be huge if bird flu continues to spread in the state. The poultry industry contributes more than \$5 billion to the state economy annually, while dairy operations add \$53.8 billion. One longtime researcher of bird flu at Texas A&M University said he didn't expect the virus to spread from human to human; 67 cases of it being transmitted to humans from poultry or cattle have been recorded, including one in Texas. One death has

been reported. "If we ever start seeing human-to-human transmission, that tells us the virus is adapting to humans," said Gerald Parker, associate dean for Global One Health at A&M. "That would not be a good sign."

STATE STRUGGLING TO FIX LEAKY ABANDONED OIL WELLS

Abandoned oil wells turned into water sources are threatening aquifers that supply water to cities, farms and ranches, the Statesman reported, particularly in rural West Texas where oil exploration began nearly a century ago. The leaky wells are called P-13 wells after a Texas Railroad Commission form that allowed them to be repurposed to provide water. The state has recorded 1,915 P-13 wells, though many more likely exist undetected and undocumented. They have the potential to become environmental disasters. One example is the 60-acre Lake Boehmer in Pecos County, formed by a leaky well. It emits high concentrations of hydrogen sulfide, a potentially fatal gas. The state committed \$10 million to plugging the leaky wells in 2023, but two years later none of that money has been distributed. Even that amount, whenever it is actually spent, is likely inadequate to solve the problem, since plugging a single well can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. "We do not know how much it will cost to plug each well, so we cannot determine how many wells could be plugged under this program," said Ricky Richter, a spokesperson for TCEQ. Federal funds that are being used to plug orphan gas and oil wells can't be used for P-13 wells, since they are no longer considered oil wells.

ABBOTT BACKS LEGALIZING SPORTS GAMBLING IN TEXAS

Abbott recently said on the Texas Take Podcast that he has no objection to Texas joining 39 other states that have legalized sports betting, the San Antonio Express News reported. "I don't have a problem with online sports betting," Abbott said in the interview. "The reality is that I'd be shocked if there were not some Texans that do it already." A coalition of major sports franchises including the Dallas Cowboys, San Antonio Spurs and Houston Astros have teamed up with several sports gaming companies to push for legalized sports gambling. They have hired more than a dozen lobbyists and have tapped former Gov. Rick Perry and Houston Rockets owner Tilman Fertitta to help make their pitch to legislators to pass such a measure. The issue ultimately would require voters to approve a constitutional amendment.

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, Lufkin and Cedar Park. Email: g.borders@texaspress.com

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New Area Code 621,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cases, moving their service, customers could be assigned one with the new 621 code.

The PUCT wanted the public to know some important facts about the new area code:

- Existing telephone numbers will not change.
- The price of a call, coverage area, or other rates and services will not change due to the new area code.
- What qualifies as a local call now will remain a local call.
- Customers in the new area code region will continue to dial 10 digits for local calls within and between the Houston-area overlay area codes, and 1+10 digits for long distance calls.
- Customers can still

dial just three digits to reach 911 and 988, as well as 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711, or 811 if those services are currently available in their community.

Telephone customers should continue to identify their telephone number as a 10-digit number (3-digit area code + 7-digit telephone number) and include the area code when sharing the number.

Customers should ensure the accurate area code is reflected across their devices and personal identification. This includes any equipment that uses their phone number (i.e. automatic dialing equipment, wireless phones, PBXs, fax machines, internet dial-up numbers, speed dialers, call for-

warding settings, voice-mail services, medical alert devices, safety alarm security systems and gates, ankle monitors). It also includes printed communications including websites, personal and business stationary and printed checks, advertising materials, contact information, and personal or pet ID tags.

For more information, please contact your local telephone provider.

Texas consumers with questions or concerns about their telecommunications service should contact their provider first. If they do not feel the provider's response adequately addressed their needs, they should contact the PUC's Consumer Protection Division.

Abbott: State of the State,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Freedom Council to require all state agencies to slash rules, fees, and regulations to expedite business.

"We know that many Texans face an affordability crisis. Last session, we slashed your property taxes. But for many Texans, those cuts were wiped out by local taxing authorities that hiked your property taxes even more. That must end this session," he said, pledging \$10 billion in new property tax relief.

"That will only work if local authorities cannot use loopholes to jack up your property taxes like Harris County did. They increased property taxes more than 10 percent last year," he said.

Abbott promised to make property tax relief an emergency item and water.

"We will also make the largest investment in water in the history of Texas. We will tap into new water supplies and repair pipes to save billions of gallons of water each year," he promised.

He also plans to add more power to the electric power grid adding at least 10,000 megawatts of power, enough to power an additional two million homes. Texas currently ranks No. 1 for electric power generation, more than California and New York combined.

"Texas is No. 1 in so

many ways, like jobs, Tier One research universities, cattle and cotton, oil and gas, and we're home to the largest medical center in the world. The list goes on. It is now time that we set our sights on another No. 1. Texas should be No. 1 in educating our children," he said.

Abbott listed three pillars to that success: empowered parents, exemplary teachers (with a pay raise), and exceptional academics.

In other related targets for education, he promised to ban DEI in grades K-12, no boys in girls' sports, and expand career education.

He promised to fully fund public schools and raise teacher pay, while also giving parents choice with vouchers.

He pledged to rid state agencies of DEI and make communities safer by eliminating parole for criminals convicted of child trafficking, capital murder, and other heinous violent crimes.

"Illegal immigrants who are arrested should be considered a flight risk, denied bail, and turned over to ICE," he said.

With that, he pledged bail reform, property rights to remove and prosecute squatters, and more funding firefighters to protect homes.

"As the world becomes more complicated and dan-

gerous, we must protect our state from hackers and hostile foreign actors. Just in the last two weeks, we have seen one of our cities, a hospital, and a major business all hit by serious cyberattacks," he said. He announced a partnership with UT at San Antonio in the creation of the Texas Cyber Command.

"We also must protect Texas from infiltration by foreign adversaries...prohibiting non-citizens from serving in state and local government and prohibiting hostile foreign nations and their agents from buying Texas land," he pledged.

He also promised to protect election integrity and empower the Attorney General to prosecute election violations.

Operation Lone Star at the border will continue as well as the border wall, buoys in the Rio Grand River, and the deployment of the Texas National Guard and DPS in the ground, water, and air.

Last year, Abbott declared an invasion at the border and designated the Mexican drug cartels foreign terrorist organizations along with the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua.

"Ultimately, our task this session is to be guardians of freedom. Freedom will persist for as long as we protect it," he said.

Groundbreaking for 47 new houses in East Aldine



We celebrated the groundbreaking of East Aldine Estates! This transformative project will bring 47 affordable homes to families earning up to 80% of the Area Median Income, offering hope and opportunity to those in need.

A heartfelt thank you to our partners including Harris County Housing and Community Development and the East Aldine community. Together, we're building more than homes—we're building brighter futures!

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PRECINCT 2 REIMAGINE ALDINE MAIL ROUTE PLANNING MEETING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH - PUBLIC INVITED

We're excited to invite you to our upcoming stakeholder meeting for Reimagine Aldine Mail Rt! This is an opportunity to share your thoughts and ideas about the future of Aldine Mail Rt.

With your guidance we can reimagine it as a safe and vibrant street that reflects the values and stories of our community.

- Meeting Details:
- Date: February 18th, 2025
- Time: 1pm - 3pm
- Location: 2909 East Aldine Amphitheatre Dr. Houston Tx. 77039

If you have any specific topics or ideas you would like to discuss, feel free to share them in your response. Thank you for your commitment to our community. We look forward to your participation!

Many Blessings,
Carmen Aguilar
Community Relations Liaison

Harris County Precinct 2

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Corridor Studies

Scan to view map and find a project near your community.

Part of Revive2Thrive


Reimagine Corridor Studies aim to revitalize Harris County Precinct 2's streets for safety and vibrancy. Through community engagement and partnerships, we prioritize safety, integrate community input, and align with Vision Zero's goal of zero traffic-related fatalities and injuries by 2030.

About Revive2Thrive

Revive2Thrive is Commissioner Garcia's community initiative focused on making Harris County Precinct 2 the best place to live, work, and play. The goal is to invest in improving infrastructure, creating economic opportunities, and enhancing residents' overall quality of life.


Our Approach

These projects follow a three-step process.




Listen

Engage and listen to the community. We do this by having in-person meetings with key stakeholders, community meetings, and online surveys.




Report

Our team gathers feedback, reports options and presents tradeoffs back to the community.




Finalize





The preferred option is finalized and presented for further feedback.



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CHURCH PAGE

BIBLE TRIVIA

By Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Levi (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From Matthew 5:5, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the ..." Kingdom, Earth, Compassion, Heavens
3. In which book's 10th chapter do we find the good Samaritan parable? Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
4. From Proverbs 29, what happens when the wicked

have authority? People mourn, Heavens blackened, Masses kill, Taxes abound

5. In Numbers 22, what animal did God allow to speak? Lamb, Donkey, Camel, Ram
6. From II Chronicles, what did Solomon ask for? Wealth, Long life, Wisdom, Honor

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Earth, 3) Luke, 4) People mourn, 5) Donkey, 6) Wisdom
 "Test Your Bible Knowledge," a book with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in stores and online.
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.

ACTS 17: 30,31

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In compliance with state requirements TEC 39A.055(3) and TEC 39A.057, a public hearing for the approval of the 2024-2025 Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs) for campuses rated Comprehensive Support based on the federal requirements of Domain III must be held. The public hearing will occur during the district's February 25 board meeting.

Campuses rated Comprehensive Support are required to submit, for Board approval, an Effective Schools Framework (ESF) Aligned TIP that will address areas of low performance identified through the three state accountability domains. The targeted elements in the plan will be implemented and monitored throughout the year as campuses engage in the continuous improvement process.

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Robert De Niro, left, and Angela Bassett star in "Zero Day."

"Zero Day"

"Mufasa: The Lion King" (PG) — This musical drama tells the story of an orphaned lion who would later become a king through the eyes of Academy-Award-winning director Barry Jenkins ("Moonlight"). Taking place after the events of "The Lion King" (2019), the film picks up after Simba, Mufasa's son, becomes King of the Pride Lands and now has a young daughter, Kiara, with his wife, Nala. While Simba's trusted friends Timon and Pumbaa watch over Kiara, the shaman Rafiki pays them a visit and decides to tell Kiara the story of her grandfather, letting viewers get whisked away to the time when Mufasa first stepped foot onto the Pride Lands. New additions to the cast include Blue Ivy Carter in her feature film debut, Mads Mikkelsen, and Thandiwe Newton.

Available to rent on Feb. 18. (Amazon Prime Video)

"One of Them Days" (R) — This comedy led by Keke Palmer and SZA can be compared to the 1995 film "Friday," starring Ice Cube and Chris Tucker. The two female leads respectively play waitress Dreux (Palmer) and aspiring artist Alyssa (SZA), who face eviction after their rent fails to get paid on time. Dreux and Alyssa deduce that Alyssa's boyfriend, Keshawn, took the rent money for his own gain, so the two women are forced into a series of shenanigans to obtain \$1,500 before the day is over. Lil Rel Howery, Katt Williams, and Maude Apatow co-star in this ridiculously entertaining film that is out now to rent. (Apple TV+)

"The White Lotus: Season 3" (TV-MA) — Mike White's smash-hit series "The White Lotus" recently premiered its third season, with the first episode out now to stream! This season is in Thailand and follows a new set of self-absorbed characters who are doomed to experience some kind of ego death while they're on vacation. Jason Isaacs (of "Harry Potter" fame), Leslie Bibb ("Palm Royale"), and Walton Goggins ("Fallout") are some of the new additions to the cast, while Natasha Rothwell reprises her role as Belinda, a spa manager from the first season that took place in Hawaii. Viewers will be glued to their screens for this show until the season's finale on April 6, and a fourth season has already been greenlit by HBO. (Max)

"Zero Day" (TV-MA) — It is hard to believe that the prolific Robert De Niro hadn't yet taken on a main role in a television series, but this role as ex-president George Mullen in Netflix's new-political-thriller miniseries is his first! In a reality that looks scarily akin to ours, George is tasked by President Evelyn Mitchell (Angela Bassett) with heading a commission for cybercriminals after a global cyberattack leaves the world in devastation. But as George begins his investigation, he's thrust into a deeply hidden conspiracy that will test his patriotic morals. Lizzy Caplan ("Fatal Attraction"), Jesse Plemons ("Civil War") and Connie Britton ("Winner") were perfectly picked to co-star and dial in the drama. All six episodes are out now for your viewing pleasure! (Netflix) (c) 2025 King Features Synd., Inc.



Q:Is it true that "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" is coming back?

Will it be a TV series or a movie? — G.A. A:Sarah Michelle Gellar, who rose to stardom after playing the titular role in the WB series "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" from 1997-2003, has confirmed that a reboot series is in its early stages of development. The actress shunned the idea of such a project for years, especially after the show's creator Joss Whedon was canceled by Hollywood for numerous allegations of misconduct. However, Gellar changed her mind recently when one of the original show's executive producers, Gail Berman, introduced her to Oscar-winning director Chloe Zhao ("Nomadland"). Both women convinced Gellar that their vision was one that would honor Buffy and her legacy.



Sarah Michelle Gellar as Buffy in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer."

According to the Los Angeles Times, the new series, which is being developed for Hulu, will center on a new, younger slayer, much like Buffy was as a teen. Gellar will also star, but it's not known yet which beloved characters from fictional Sunnydale, California, will also return. ***

Q: Why is there not going to be a new season of "The Bachelorette" this year? Has it been canceled?

— M.E. A:No, "The Bachelorette" hasn't been canceled, but it has been put on hiatus. It normally airs a new installment in the summer following "The Bachelor," which recently premiered on ABC for its 29th season. However, no reason has been given for why its female counterpart is being put on the shelf indefinitely. The ratings for Jenn Tran's season last year were no worse than Charity Lawson's the year before, but Tran did have a heartbreaking ending. She proposed to her chosen suitor Devin Strader, only to have him break up with her (via phone no less) before the "After the Final Rose" live reunion. Fortunately, Tran ended up meeting her current beau, Sasha Farber, when she was paired up with him on "Dancing with the Stars." According to Entertainment Weekly, this isn't the first time the show has taken a long break. The magazine stated: "After

three consecutive January premieres, 'The Bachelorette' took two years off in 2006 and 2007 before returning with season four in 2008, which, in turn, resulted in the show moving to a summer launch date." As for who will eventually follow in Tran's footsteps, we'll just have to wait and see! ***

Q: Who is the new female judge on "The Voice"?

I know she's a singer, but I've never heard of her before. — S.K. A:While she looks much younger, 31-year-old Kelsea Ballerini is a new coach on the latest season of the singing competitive reality show "The Voice." Growing up in Knoxville, Tennessee, Ballerini became the first solo female country music artist to earn a No. 1 hit with her debut single ("Love Me Like You Mean It") since Carrie Underwood accomplished the same. In the next decade, Ballerini would go on to be nominated for five Grammy Awards. Underwood, who is now 41 years old, has taken home eight Grammys since winning "American Idol" in 2005. Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com, or write me at KFWS, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. (c) 2025 King Features Synd., Inc.

ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves

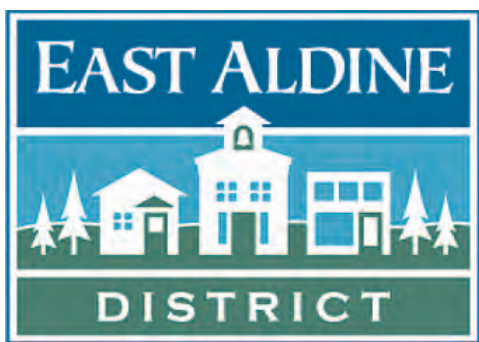


Weekly SUDOKU grid and difficulty instructions

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King Crossword puzzle grid and word list

Trivia test questions and answers



Coming Events in East Aldine

By Monica Campos, Marketing Manager

We are thrilled to share our resources and events happening for the community this month. Join us at our committee meetings and our Board of Directors meeting. Express your community concerns, connect with us, and provide your feedback.

We're excited to join our partners at Baker Ripley for their V-Day Flower Sale and their Black History Month Celebration! Including celebrating President's Day with Bonding Against Adversity at our JFK monument. Attached are flyers for events for more information.

It's all about healthy living at our Revitalizing East Aldine Community Health committee meeting. We will meet to discuss health initiatives and events for 2025, for more information email events@aldinedistrict.org. Also, don't miss out on joining the challenge with High Meadows Branch Library to learn how to eat healthier, save money, and get more active. Register for this FREE class now!

Networking, lunch, and learning! Join us and the Greater Northside Chamber for our FREE Small Business Series and let's talk tax updates and building connections. Register here: AldineDistrict.org/RSVP

In case you missed our eNews Distribution we invite you to subscribe and stay connected at AldineDistrict.org/Subscribe

Should you have any questions, please reach out to me.

Estamos encantados de compartir nuestros recursos y eventos que están sucediendo para la comunidad este mes. Acompáñenos en nuestras reuniones para

los comités y la Junta Directiva. Expresar sus preocupaciones de la comunidad, conéctese con nosotros y comparte sus comentarios.

¡Estamos muy contentos de unirnos a nuestros socios en Baker Ripley para su venta de flores del día de San Valentín y su Celebración del Mes de la Historia AfroAmericana! Incluyendo la Celebración del Día del Presidente con Bonding Against Adversity en nuestro monumento JFK. Vea los folletos de eventos para más información.

Se trata de una vida saludable en nuestra reunión del comité de Revitalización de la salud comunitaria de East Aldine o R.E.A.C.H. por sus siglas en inglés. Nos reuniremos para discutir iniciativas y eventos de salud para 2025, para obtener más información, envíe un correo electrónico a events@aldinedistrict.org. Además, no se pierda la oportunidad de unirse al desafío con la Biblioteca de High Meadows para aprender a comer de manera más saludable, ahorrar dinero y ser más activo. ¡Regístrese para esta clase GRATIS hoy!

Únase a nosotros y el Greater Northside Chamber para nuestra serie para negocios GRATIS. Una oportunidad de networking, amplía tu red de contactos profesionales y habrá comida gratis. Regístrese aquí: AldineDistrict.org/RSVP

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Respectfully,
Monica Campos

Marketing Manager
East Aldine District

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GRATIS - ACOMPÁÑENOS

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GREATER NORTHSIDE CHAMBER

"Gateways" Planned for East Aldine

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

will be visible at night. Whether it's kinetic or static lighting, we want these to become their own art projects," he expounded.

He's also in a hurry. "All of this is to the run up for the World Cup in 2026 when Houston will be hosting seven matches in June. We want to roll out the red carpet especially with our proximity to Bush Airport on our doorstep," he said.

His hope is that some of that traffic will venture through Aldine, spending a few dollars here on their way into town.

"This is really to showcase our district, our community, the history, the vibrancy of the people we have here today."

The public meeting was important, he shared, to gain input from the community and not make it a project of 10 people in a boardroom making top-down decisions.

The posters found on the walls around the community center were not the final designs or colors but just prompts to help lead the themes that will rise to the top.

"So, strength and resilience, hope and unity, are beautiful words but how do you represent them visually," he asked.

He pointed out that there are guidelines from the city, county, and state infrastructure that they must meet.

"With TxDOT, for example, it can't be images of people, portraits, or certain words. It can't be distracting and must remain safe," he said.

Instead, they will use shapes, colors, geometry,



Bob McCorkle, a resident on Oakville in the area, who likes the idea of the public art for community pride. He likes that it will encompass the history of the area.



Deputy Luis Stark chats with Joel Martinez of UP Art Studio about some of the design, video production and choices for the new art. He doesn't live in the community, but patrols the area and believes it will be good for the community.

patterns, those sorts of things to create themes.

He was particularly pleased with the turnout.

"This is a great cross-section of the community. We have residents, students, community leaders, board members, trustees from Aldine ISD, and much more," he said.

Elia Quiles is one of the o-founders of UP Art Studio who works with the management district to fulfill their vision.

"They hired us to do an assessment and to do a drop of designs for these in what they could look like, how much it will cost, and what it will take to implement them," she said.

Quiles said this was the third community meeting around the area.

"Now we're at the stage of narrowing in on what themes for each location and what does the imagery for those themes look like," she said.

This won't be the last meeting.

"We'll come back and keep involving them," she said.

Since the project hasn't been narrowed down exactly, it was hard to give an exact amount but she said it would be more than six figures.

They hope to finalize the planning process in late March or early April.

UP Art has done multiple underpass projects including one on US 90 and South Main with five intersections with solid colors and changing lights. Across Texas they have also done projects in Laredo, Victoria, and more.