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NORTHEAST NEWS



Serving the Neighborhoods of Aldine, Greenspoint, US59 Eastex, Beltway 8 and North Forest for over 50 Years
 VOL. 50, NO. 1 TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2026 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

East Aldine District Celebrates 2025 Partner Awards

The East Aldine Management District celebrated its 2025 Partner Awards on Dec. 12, 2025. They proudly recognized individuals and organizations whose dedication made a meaningful difference in East Aldine this year:

Community Partner Award

David & Nataly DeLeon, Break'N Bread

For four years of service, outreach, and genuine care for children and families through food, events, and community engagement.

Public Health Partner Award

Jon Schwartz, Harris County Public Health

For improving the quality of life by addressing public health and nuisance issues across East Aldine.

Public Safety Partner Award



AWARD RECIPIENTS AT THE 2025 EAST ALDINE DISTRICT AWARDS CEREMONY

Sergeant José Díaz, Harris County Sheriff's Office

For leadership, professionalism, and commitment to keeping our

community safe.
Governmental Partner of the Year
Myriam Saldívar

For more than 15 years of dedicated public service

and advocacy for the Aldine/North Houston community.

Business Partner of the Year

Greater Northside Chamber of Commerce

For empowering small businesses through training, networking, and economic opportunity.

Volunteer of the Year
Norma Mares

Continued. See PARTNER AWARDS, Page 8

Westfield FD & East Aldine Christmas Parade

Showcasing Holiday Spirit for the Community



EAST ALDINE - The Westfield Fire Department proudly joined residents, businesses, and local organizations for the annual East Aldine Christmas Parade, celebrating the holiday season with a strong display of community spirit and partnership.

Westfield FD officials expressed sincere appreciation to Harris County Pct. 2, and the East Aldine District for extending the invitation and for organizing an event that emphasized unity, safety, and neighborhood pride. Fire department representatives said it was an honor

Continued. See PARADE SHOWCASES EAST ALDINE, Page 5



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KEENEY'S KORNER

Nimitz High's Cornelius Harmon earns 3rd straight Northeast News Coach of Year honors

By Mike Keeney
 Contributing Writer

In four years as the head football coach at Nimitz High School, Cornelius Harmon has forged a 29-14 record (67% winning percentage) and has led the Cougars to four straight playoff appearances.

This season, while taking Nimitz to the playoffs once again, he added another couple of accomplishments to his resume, namely a District 14-6A title for his squad and Coach of the Year honors from his peers in the league.

Harmon's winning ways have once again earned him the Northeast News' Coach of the Year honors for the third straight season. Last year he shared the award with Davis High School head football coach Kelvin Chatman.

Nimitz finished 8-3 on the season and finally wrestled the league title away from Westfield, which has seemed to own the league crown for decades.

Before Harmon arrived at the school located on W.W. Thorne Drive, Nimitz last had a winning season in 2007. Now it appears, the Cougars are going to be perennial playoff participants.

While Harmon, who was named one of the state's



best high school coaches under 40 by Dave Campbell's Texas Football Magazine in its preview edition, was happy with the overall season, he was a bit disappointed how it ended, with a 38-28 bi-district loss to Grand Oaks.

"It wasn't a bad season," Harmon said. "I thought we'd get out of the first round. We had our chances, but we didn't finish the job."

Football has played an important role in Harmon's life. He starred as a quarterback in Port Arthur and then spent two years at the position at Texas Southern University.

He began his coaching career at Port Arthur Memorial, where he spent

nine years before moving onto Summer Creek High School in Humble ISD, where he served under his mentor, Summer Creek head coach Kenny Harrison for four years. While at Summer Creek he served as the school's offensive coordinator.

"I love coaching kids," Harmon said. "This is the kind of job where you can have an impact on young men's lives, and I think that's very important. Football is my life. If it wasn't for football, I don't know what I'd be doing. I want to win a winning environment for our kids and I want our kids to

Continued. See KEENEY'S KORNER, Page 5

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★★★★★ "As a mom with two young daughters, and a doula who stresses the importance of hydration, providing my family and clients with safer, cleaner water is very important to me. I'm grateful for companies like LeafHome that understand my needs and can provide the right solutions." **Emmy Robins** Homeowner

24-Year-Old Male Charged in Taco Truck Murder on Dyna

HARRIS COUNTY - A 24-year-old male has been charged with murder in connection with the shooting death of a taco truck operator, according to the Houston Police Department.

The shooting happened on Dec. 4 at 119 West Dyna Drive just before 11 p.m., HPD said at the time.

"(The victim) was found by his family members that arrived on scene, as they were worried because they had not heard from him since he said he was going to be closing up," HPD Lt. Kahn said at the scene.

Police said two men walked up to the business, one man shot into the business while the second one took money from the business. Both suspects fled the location on foot.

On Wednesday, nearly a week after the deadly shooting, HPD said an investigation identified a 24-year-old Angel Adonis Saldivar-James as the suspect who fired the shot that killed 36-year-old Yaddua Barraza Hernandez according to Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences.

Saldivar-James was arrested on Monday and is



Angel Adonis Saldivar-James. 24-year-old

currently in the Harris County Jail, according to authorities.

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HIGH MEADOWS LIBRARY NEWS

Toddler Time

Tuesday, January 13, 11:30am-12:00pm

Description Looking for a place to connect with others and give your toddlers a safe, fun environment? Join us for a morning filled with stories, games, and laughter!

Game Zone

Tuesday, January 13, 3:00pm-5:00pm

Description Decompress from a long day at school every Tuesday by playing video games at the library! Challenge your friends to a competition or just come hang out! No registration is required. This event is open to ages 11 to 18.

Pokémon Club

Tuesday, January 13, 3:00pm-4:00pm

Description Do you want to be the very best trainer? Pokémon Club is for anyone who enjoys making crafts, playing games, doing Pokémon challenges all while meeting new friends who enjoy pocket monsters as much as you do. Every month there is a new event in this club, so the adventure is always changing. Ages 8+

Computer Basics

Tuesday, January 13, 4:00pm-5:00pm

Description Unlock the Power of Technology! Are you new to using a computer or just want to brush up on the basics? Join us for a hands-on class designed to help you feel more confident and comfortable with computers to complete everyday tasks. What you'll learn in this class: Identifying computer hardware How to use the

mouse and keyboard Learn how to access the internet and emails

Krafty Kids

Wednesday, January 14, 3:30pm-4:30pm

Description Krafty Kids offers a fantastic chance for your children to unleash their creativity while having a great time in a safe and inviting space. Whether it's painting, drawing, sculpting, or other activities, there's something for every budding artist to delight in.

The Magic of Color

Wednesday, January 14, 5:30pm-7:00pm

Description De-stress, unwind, and enjoy the almost-magical calm that comes from painting with watercolors.

This is not an art class — it's a chance to be creative and relax while enjoying each other's company in an encouraging environment. See the colors flow from your imagination to the paper and let your worries drift away for a while. This program is for adults 18+.

FutureU Walk-ins

Thursday, January 15, 12:00pm-6:00pm

Description Connect with a Future U advisor! Discover the college and career resources around you.

Get help with: Resume & cover letters FAFSA application Free resources for career development To make an appointment, please click on the link below or call. Virtual appointments are also available. FutureU Appointment ¡Conéctate con un asesor de Future U! Descubre los recursos universitarios, profesionales, y ayuda con aplicaciones para el trabajo. Todos los recursos y ayuda son totalmente gratis! Obtenga ayuda con: Curriculum (resume) y carta

de trabajo Encontrar ayuda financiera (FAFSA) Recursos gratuitos para el desarrollo profesional (con su tarjeta de biblioteca gratis) Para programar una cita, haz clic en el enlace de abajo o llama. También ofrecemos citas virtuales.

ESL Winter Workshop I Taller de Inglés de Invierno

Thursday, January 15, 12:45pm-1:45pm

Description Keep practicing your English this winter! This informal class gives you an opportunity to keep learning and refresh your memory in a welcoming, stress-free environment. Don't let the holidays stand in your way—play games, practice conversations, and finally ask the English questions you've always wanted answered! ¡Siga practicando su inglés este invierno! Esta clase informal de conversación le ofrece la oportunidad de seguir aprendiendo y refrescar lo aprendido en un ambiente acogedor y libre de estrés. No deje que las fiestas lo detengan: juegue, practique conversaciones y por fin haga las preguntas sobre el inglés que siempre ha querido que le respondan.

Teen Lounge

Thursday, January 15, 3:00pm-5:00pm

Description Calling all teens and tweens! This is your space to relax and unwind. Draw and color, play some games, do a craft, or hang out with your friends—the possibilities are endless! No registration is required. This event is open to ages 12 to 18.

AIRLINE LIBRARY NEWS

ESL Registration 2026

Wednesday, January 07, 12:00pm-1:30pm

Description Join us for registration for ESL classes on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays!

REGISTRATION will be held in person on the following days and times: Jan 6th: 5-6pm and Jan. 7 and 8th from 12pm - 1:30pm.

You MUST register and take the assessment before you can attend classes.

2026 Upcoming Classes:

Tuesdays: Jan. 13- March 3rd, 2026,

ESL 1 Class: 1-2pm.

ESL Conversation Level 2 class: 6-7:30 pm.

Wednesdays: Jan. 14th- March 4th

ESL 2 Class: 1-2pm.

Thursdays: Jan. 15th- March 5th

ESL Conversation 1 Class: 1-2 Pm

Tween Spark Cartoon Marathon

Wednesday, January 07, 4:00pm-6:00pm

Description Join us at Aldine for a cartoon marathon! Talk about your favorite series and characters with others who like the same shows and check out a show you haven't seen before. Snacks will be provided.

This program is best for 6th-9th graders

Tactile Tots

Thursday, January 08, 10:30am-11:30am

Description Come and join us for an hour of sensory exploration and discov-

ery! This program will allow children to touch, see and hear different textures and objects. Their curiosity and investigation will help develop cognitive, fine motor, and language skills through play. Dress to get messy! Ven y únete a nosotros para una hora de exploración y descubrimiento sensorial! Este programa permitirá a los niños tocar, ver y escuchar diferentes texturas y objetos. Su curiosidad e investigación les ayudará a desarrollar habilidades cognitivas, motoras finas y lingüísticas a través del juego. Usa ropa que se pueda ensuciar.

Homework Help/Ayuda con Tarea

Thursday, January 08, 5:30pm-6:30pm

Description Looking for homework help? Come on in to your local library to find the resources you need for success! Aldine Library will offer a quiet space for teens and kids on Thursdays @ 5:30 PM. Librarians will be on hand to provide assistance.

Harris County Public Library offers a variety of free resources, including computers, printers, and access to special research websites available with your library card.

Note: Librarians will not do the homework nor can we guarantee any grades; this program is here to offer assistance answering questions.

¿Necesitas ayuda con las tareas? ¡Ven a tu biblioteca local y encuentra los recursos que necesitas para triunfar! La Biblioteca Aldine ofrecerá un espacio tranquilo para adolescentes y niños los jueves a las 5:30

p. m. Los bibliotecarios estarán disponibles para brindar asistencia.

La Biblioteca Pública del Condado de Harris ofrece una variedad de recursos gratuitos, incluyendo computadoras, impresoras y acceso a sitios web especiales de investigación disponibles con tu tarjeta de biblioteca. Nota: Los bibliotecarios no harán los deberes ni pueden garantizar ninguna calificación; este programa está aquí para ofrecer ayuda respondiendo preguntas.

Winter of the Snow Queen Saturday, January 10, 2:00pm-3:00pm

Description Brave Little Company is performing Winter of the Snow Queen

This new co-production is a festive, interactive celebration of bravery and family that welcomes all audience members. An interactive play with music inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's The Snow Queen and other tales. On the darkest night of the year, a boy vanishes—and his best friend needs your help to rescue him from the Snow Queen's icy grasp. Join the adventure, help shape the story, and sing along in this festive, family-friendly winter show created by Brave Little Company and Stages.

Aldine Branch Library 11331 Airline Dr. Houston, TX 77037 Phone: 832-927-5410

SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Aldine ISD Student Artists Selected for Threads of Gold Exhibition



The students from Hall Success Academy show off their "Ojos de Dios" (God's eyes), which were included in the 2025 Threads of Gold exhibition. Hall Success Academy was among the five Aldine ISD campuses selected for the exhibit.

EAST ALDINE - Aldine ISD student artists were selected to showcase their work in Threads of Gold, an annual student art exhibition hosted by The Faris Foundation in collaboration with the Asia Society Texas Center. Gallery Night was held late this fall semester in Houston.

Threads of Gold is both a professional development workshop for art educators and a student art exhibition that reaches more than 100,000 students across the Houston area each year through art and advocacy. The exhibition is part of a broader initiative that encourages students to use their creativity to raise awareness about childhood cancer.

Through Threads of Gold, students learn how art can serve as a powerful tool for social engagement and change. Inspired by the color gold — the symbol for childhood cancer awareness — the initiative highlights how artistic expression can heal, connect, and inspire while empowering students to make a difference through their work.

The following Aldine ISD campuses proudly represented the district in this year's exhibition:

Aldine Ninth Grade School



Young Women's Leadership Academy

Isai Castro Maryi Hernández Gómez Luis López Fátima Granados Ramos Lessly Urias Sagastume Art Teacher: Anitra Ashewood

Eisenhower High School

Mia Ocean, 12th Grade Art Teacher: Sarah Schoborg

Hall Success Academy

Anthony Castro, 9th Grade
Rebekah Cortez, 10th Grade
Jaleel Howard, 12th Grade
IViona Paige, 12th Grade
Leanne Rodríguez, 12th Grade
Jazmin Smith, 11th Grade
Art Teacher: Ketsia Hamilton

Hill Elementary School

Isella Covarrubias, 5th Grade
Isabella Hernández, 4th Grade
Jazmit Melgar Melgar, 4th Grade
Mia Argueta Marroquín, 5th Grade
Ava Milán, 4th Grade
Savannah Osorio, 3rd Grade
Harley Pruitt-Vallone, 4th Grade
Ava Velásquez, 5th Grade
Art Teacher: Christian Perkins



Eisenhower High School

Young Women's Leadership Academy

Camila Fajardo, 6th Grade
Mia Gálvez & Elynn García, 7th Grade
Jessica Hernández, 11th Grade
Journey Lacy, 6th Grade
Lhea Lampkin, 6th Grade
Kaylah Látigo, 6th Grade
Ramona Ohlsen, 11th Grade
Victoria Vargas-Osorio, 6th Grade
Art Teacher: Leida Vázquez

"This is a meaningful opportunity for our student artists to use their talents for a greater purpose," said Kaileigh Newman, Aldine ISD director of visual arts. "We are honored to have participated in an event that highlights the power of art to inspire hope and compassion."

This year marks Threads of Gold's expansion to include Aldine ISD, along with Alief, Fort Bend and Pasadena ISDs and the Harris County Department of Education. In 2025, 33 teachers contributed more than 500 pieces of student artwork, representing voices from across Houston and surrounding communities.

For more information about The Faris Foundation and its programs, visit thefarisfoundation.org.

Layla Hurd, Plummer Middle School eighth-grader, wins Día de los Muertos Poetry Contest



Photo from Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia's visit to Plummer Middle School to honor Día de los Muertos Poem Competition winner Layla Hurd, who read her winning poem, "Dance of Spirits," in the school's library on Monday, Dec. 8, 2025.

Creativity, culture and student voice took center stage on Monday, Dec. 8, at Plummer Middle School, where eighth-grade student Layla Hurd was recognized as the winner of the Día de los Muertos Poetry Contest.

Layla earned first place for her original poem, "Dance of Spirits," an evocative piece that celebrates tradition, memory and cultural identity through poetry.

A special presentation ceremony was held at 2 p.m. in the Plummer Middle School library, where U.S. Rep. Sylvia Garcia visited the campus to personally congratulate Layla and present her award in front of students, staff and family members. The visit highlighted the importance of honoring student creativity while celebrating cultural traditions within the school community.

Following the visit, Rep. Garcia emphasized the significance of initiatives like this one, noting how meaningful it is to see students use their voices to honor heritage and shared history.

In a statement shared on social media, Garcia said, "It's so important to see our traditions carried on, celebrated and shared throughout the community."



Layla Hurd is a student in Ms. Witherspoon's English Language Arts class

Layla is a student in Ms. Witherspoon's English Language Arts class, and her achievement reflects not only her literary talent, but also Plummer Middle School's commitment to nurturing student voice, creativity and a love of writing.

Aldine ISD congratulates Layla Hurd on this accomplishment and applauds Plummer Middle School for continuing to uplift student expression, cultural pride and academic excellence.

Caraway Elementary Earns a National Student Creator Digital Challenge Distinction



The recognition earned the campus an ice cream celebration.

What started as a creative classroom challenge turned into a sweet moment of celebration for Caraway Elementary School students.

This fall, Caraway Cougars poured their imagination, gratitude, and problem-solving skills into digital designs — never knowing their work would earn them national recognition. Weeks later, that creativity paid off when the campus was named the top K-12 school in the country for the submissions in the Adobe Student Creator Challenge, securing first place and an Adobe-sponsored ice cream truck visit for students and staff on Dec. 17.

Caraway Elementary School earned the national distinction of submitting the most student projects among participating K-12 schools across the United States. The Adobe Student Creator Challenge encourages students to use critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills while inspiring the next generation of student creators.

Students used Adobe Express, a free digital media app available to K-12 classrooms, to design "Plush Pals" dedicated to teachers, friends, and family. Plush pals are a popular educational design activity within Adobe Express where students use generative AI to design a custom character. Through their designs, students unlocked their creativity while sharing messages of appreciation, care, and gratitude.

The challenge was inten-

tionally woven into Caraway's campus culture as the school's second House Competition of the year. Caraway students and staff are part of four Houses — Amistad (Friendship), Perseverancia (Perseverance), Respeto (Respect), and Valentía (Courage) — designed to build relationships, strengthen community, and encourage collaboration. House assignments were randomly selected during House Selection Day at the beginning of the school year, an event attended by School Assistant Superintendent Scott A. Dubberke.

"Our digital learning specialist team from the AISD Technology Department shared the Adobe Student Creator Challenge in October, calling it a 'Spooktacular Challenge,'" said Jesús Castellano, an inclusion paraprofessional at Caraway Elementary who helped lead the initiative at the campus. "Once I saw the deadline was in November, I knew it was the perfect opportunity to turn it into our second House Competition. It truly became a team effort."

Castellano said campus leaders, including the House Committee, digital learning specialist tech team, and special teachers, collaborated to introduce the challenge to students. In the days that followed, student excitement quickly grew.

"My favorite part was seeing our Caraway Cougars put so much effort, energy, and love into their Plush Pals," Castellano said. "They were

flexing the power of their imagination while unlocking their creative potential. Winning was exciting, but it wouldn't have happened without every single student and staff member pushing us to the finish line."

The good news arrived shortly after Thanksgiving break while students were engaged in STAAR rehearsal testing. Adobe notified campus leadership that Caraway Elementary had been named the national winner. As a result, students and staff were awarded a visit from Southern Ice Cream, which serves Texas-style ice cream truck treats.

As Aldine ISD works to realign resources and provide targeted support, Opportunity Schools receive additional assistance to accelerate student outcomes and remove barriers more effectively. Opportunity Schools receive more specialized support from all areas of the district, including leadership support and student support services, to increase student outcomes.


Caraway's national recognition highlights how that support, combined with strong campus leadership and student engagement, can translate into meaningful learning experiences — and memorable moments.

Building on this success, Caraway Elementary plans to participate in the 2026 Adobe Student Creator Challenge, continuing to give students opportunities to think creatively, collaborate, and shine on a national stage.

You can read the Northeast News current and back issues on our website:
www.nenewsroom.com

OPINION PAGE

OPINION
By **BILL KING**

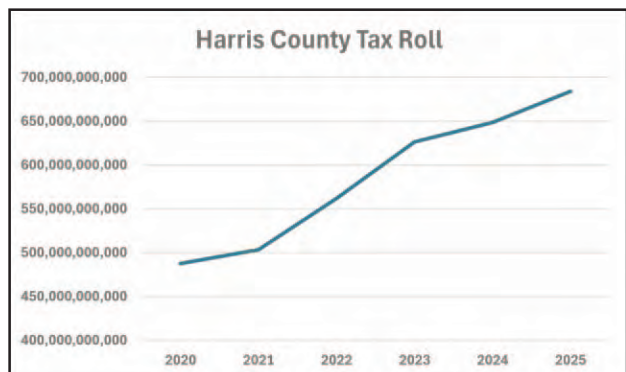


Harris County Tax Roll Up by 6% . . . for Now

The Harris Central Appraisal District (HCAD) has finished adjudicating all but a handful of property accounts. As of today, the countywide taxable value of all properties stands at about \$684 billion. When HCAD finishes its last few accounts, the taxable roll will be about \$688 billion. That will be about a \$40 billion increase over last year's roll, approximately a 6% increase. According to HCAD, around a third of the increase in value comes from new construction, with the rest from increases in the value of existing properties.

The final tax roll will not be determined for years because after HCAD completes its administrative adjudication of any protests, the taxpayer can either file suit in District Court or, in some cases, file an arbitration with the State Comptroller's Office. According to HCAD, taxpayer appeals from last year resulted in just over \$9 billion in value reductions. HCAD has also said that appeals are increasing each year, and they expect the 2025 appeals to set a new record.

The growth in the tax roll has definitely slowed from the supercharged increases during the pandemic. In 2021 and 2022, the roll jumped by double digits. The last two years, however, it has returned to mid-single-digit growth.



However, the taxable value is just the first factor in the multiplication that determines your final bill. The other factor is, of course, the tax rate set by the governing body of the taxing entities. Believe it or not, there are 626 active property tax collecting entities in Harris County. We'll have to save a discussion on the idiocy of having over 600 tax entities crammed into 1800 square miles for another day.

In 2025, just under 20% of taxing entities in Harris County increased their tax rates, while 40% reduced theirs. The remaining entities did not change their rates. You can look up what your taxing entities did with their rates on this **HCAD report**.

Each one of these taxing entities has its own unique circumstances. For example, Galena Park ISD raised its tax rate by a hefty 6.6%. However, its taxable roll as of HCAD's latest numbers is down by nearly 3%. And because that District is home to many industrial facilities, which are among the most active protesters of value, its tax roll could deteriorate even further.

Further complicating the calculation this year is that homeowners will benefit from the increased homestead exemption on their property taxes. When you factor all of these together, my guess is that most homeowners will see flat-to slightly lower taxes this year. For some homes with more modest valuations, the school reduction could be significant. Many lower-income seniors will pay no school taxes at all. In contrast, I suspect that most commercial property owners will see increases in their tax bills unless they aggressively protest their values.

But I would love to hear about your experience, so drop me a note about your tax bill this year. email:

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, 5832 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**



Crockett, Talarico to Face off in Democratic Primary

U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett, D-Dallas, entered the U.S. Senate race on the final day to file, pitting her against state Rep. James Talarico, D-Round Rock. The Austin American-Statesman reported the difference between the two is more of style than substance, with both raising the issues of income inequality, rising prices, corruption and polarization.

Crockett, in her second House term, has made a name by attacking both President Donald Trump and other GOP opponents, such as U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene. In her announcement on Dec. 8, she warned Trump, "I'm coming for you."

Talarico has also gained a large social media audience with a message far less confrontational in nature. He is a Presbyterian seminary student whose Christian faith is a running theme.

"I am called to love all of my neighbors like I love myself, because despite our differences, we all want the same things: a safe neighborhood, a good job, a quality, well-funded public school, and the ability to see a doctor when you need one," he said at his announcement.

The Republican primary also promises to be a spirited race, with incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn facing two challengers: Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and U.S. Rep. Wesley Hunt, R-Houston.

TAX CUTS MAJOR PART OF ABBOTT'S RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Gov. Greg Abbott is seeking an unprecedented fourth term and is making property tax cuts the centerpiece of his campaign. He faces 10 largely unknown candidates in the GOP primary and is widely expected to win the nomination.

Abbott wants to make it harder for Texas cities and counties to raise property taxes and has also called for the elimination of school property taxes for homeowners and a slowdown in the rise of property values, according to The Texas Tribune.

Both cities and counties rely heavily on property taxes to pay for services such as public safety, parks, libraries, and road maintenance. Lawmakers in 2019 passed tighter limits on how much they can increase property taxes without voter approval.

"Local property taxes are the foundation of essential commu-



nity services — they keep police and firefighters on duty, streets maintained, and trash collected," said Monty Wynn, who heads the Texas Municipal League.

In recent years, the Legislature has cut school property taxes by billions of dollars, primarily by raising the homestead exemption. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has proposed increasing that exemption by another \$40,000 and allowing homeowners at age 55 to take an additional \$60,000 off their home's taxable value. That benefit is now limited to those 65 and older.

TEXAS LEADS NATION IN 12-MONTH JOB GAINS

The state's job market continues to outpace the rest of the nation, according to labor market data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Texas Workforce Commission. The state now has the largest labor force in its history at 15.879 million, gaining 168,000 jobs from September 2024 to September 2025.

"Texas' job market and labor force continue to grow because we have a dynamic workforce system that fosters opportunity for businesses and workers alike," said TWC Chairman Joe Esparza. "TWC will continue to provide the resources and support needed to keep this momentum and ensure that Texas remains a national leader in economic opportunity."

The state's unemployment rate stood at 4.4% in September, nearly identical to the national rate.

STATE PLAN TO BATTLE SCREWWORMS FACES PUSHBACK

As the New World Screwworm makes its way to the Texas-Mexico border, potentially endangering livestock and wildlife, the Texas Animal Health Commission's proposed plan to combat it is facing pushback from agriculture groups, The Tri-

bune reported.

A panel of lawmakers heard from state and federal officials as well as industry groups last week.

"The plan needs significant revision," said Tim Niedecken, executive director of the Livestock Marketing Association of Texas. He said the draft plan would require animals being moved out of an infested zone to have an ear tag, a vet inspection and receive treatment. That does not "meet the realities of this industry today," he told lawmakers.

Dr. Lewis "Bud" Dinges, Texas Animal Health Commission's executive director, said it will likely publish its response plan in about two months. He said the goal is to align with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure their actions do not harm trade.

The USDA is building a sterile fly production facility at Moore Air Base in South Texas and is also assisting with similar efforts in Panama. The screwworm was detected about 70 miles from the Texas border in September. It infests cattle by laying eggs in open wounds and can be fatal if untreated.

NOVEMBER WAS WARMER AND DRIER THAN NORMAL

A trend that began in August continued through November, with warmer and drier weather throughout much of the state, according to Dr. Mark Wentzel, a hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board. By the end of November, 54% of the state was in drought — up 20 percentage points in about a month.

Wentzel said by the end of next February, drought conditions are expected to improve in the eastern half of the state but get worse in the western half.

South Texas and the Big Bend region of West Texas are experiencing the most severe levels of drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

MORE THAN 4 MILLION REAL CHRISTMAS TREES SOLD IN TEXAS ANNUALLY

Real Christmas trees are an important contributor to the Texas economy, according to Texas A&M Forest Service, with more than 4 million sold each year. That generated a total economic contribution of \$812.7 million and produced more than 6,000 jobs last year.

"Real Christmas trees hold cultural, environmental and economic significance, but the scope of this study was focused specifically on the economic contribution of the real Christmas tree industry," said Xufang Zhang, Ph.D., Texas A&M Forest Service Forest Resource Analyst.

Tree production acreage has increased from 945 acres in 2017 to 3,565 acres in 2022. The average Christmas tree takes about seven years to reach maturity.

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: gborders@texaspress.com.

THE POSTSCRIPT
By **Carrie Classon**

More of The Same



Yesterday I saw a friend, Bridget, whom I had not seen for a full year. "How have you been?" she asked.

"I have learned a lot about myself this year," I told her. But at the time it was hard to say just what I'd learned.

It's the time of year when we think of what we've learned in the year behind us and make resolutions for the new year. I try not to make New Year's resolutions. All the studies show that motivation wanes by February—if we're lucky. Changing my life by flipping a switch on December 31st is not a feasible plan. I remind myself that it is the small changes that matter. It is the daily habits that add up. It is the incremental improvements I make every day and week that result in lasting change.

But not this year. This year, I'm making a New Year's resolution.

And the only reason I don't think I'm being foolish about the whole thing is that this year, I'm not making a resolution because I feel I've failed at something or need some kind of serious improvement. I'm making a resolution to do more of the same—a lot more.

Because sometimes, as I sift through my life for the things I wish I did better, I miss what really matters. I forget how good my life is—how strong my relationships are, how fortunate I am to have the friends and family I have, how lucky I am to have a mind that still works and a body that does what I need it to do.

This year, for whatever reason, I spent a lot more time doing things I truly enjoy, and I spent a lot less time beating myself up for not doing things I thought I should do.

I decided not to worry too much about what I ate and, instead, ate a lot of things I really love, and—to my surprise—I stayed exactly at the weight my body likes to be. I knew that writing brings me joy, and worrying about what will happen after I've written causes a lot of stress. So I let go. I worried less. And I discovered that worrying less left a lot more time for writing.

I spent more time with friends. I reached out more often. I said "yes" to invitations. I listened to my husband Peter's advice and, if I felt like sleeping in, I did. I talked to more dogs. I ate more cake. I listened to more music.

This year, I just got a little better at living in my own skin, at trusting myself, at letting myself enjoy what I was doing and spend more time doing it.

Since retiring, Bridget has taken up diving. She discovered she has a talent for taking beautiful photos of tiny fish that are seldom seen and almost never photographed. She loves it. She does it whenever she can. She hopes that she might be able to do it for another 20 years. And that is her resolution: to stay healthy enough to keep doing this new thing she loves for as long as she can.

That is my New Year's resolution—and my New Year's revelation as well.

Maybe I work hard enough right now. Maybe I'm healthy enough, fit enough, smart enough today. Maybe the self-improvement projects can be put on indefinite hold to make more time to do all the things I love.

And Bridget and I agreed: We needed to see each other before another year had passed.

Till next time,
Carrie

top ten

Most Popular Christmas Movies of All Time

1. The Santa Clause 2 (2002)
2. The Nutcracker and the Four Realms (2018)
3. The Santa Clause (1994)
4. The Holiday (2006)
5. Elf (2003)
6. The Polar Express (2004)
7. A Christmas Carol (2009)
8. How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000)
9. Home Alone (1990)
10. The Grinch (2018)

*Source: ScreenCrush

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Founding Member North Houston Chamber (now Houston Intercontinental)
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Parade showcases East Aldine community spirit,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

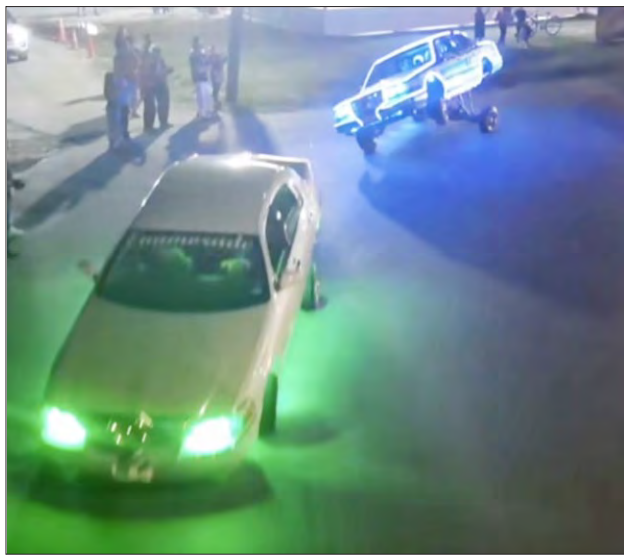
to participate in a parade that continues to grow as a cherished tradition for families across East Aldine.

The parade brought together first responders, community groups, and partner agencies, all working together to create a festive and welcoming atmosphere. Decorated vehicles, flashing lights, and holiday music lined the parade route as residents gathered along the streets, waving and cheering in support. Firefighters noted that the enthusiastic turnout and warm reception from the public made the evening especially meaningful.

"We truly enjoyed celebrating the holiday season alongside our neighbors and partner agencies," the department shared in a statement. "The support shown by the community throughout the parade route was overwhelming and deeply appreciated."

Department members offered special thanks to residents who came out to participate, as well as volunteers and organizers who helped ensure the event ran smoothly. According to Westfield Fire officials, events like the East Aldine Christmas Parade reflect the strong bonds between public safety agencies and the communities they serve.

The East Aldine District was also recognized for its continued commitment to hosting inclusive, commu-



nity-focused events that bring people together. Fire department leaders said the parade serves as a reminder of the importance of collaboration and mutual support, particularly during the holiday season.

Beyond the celebration, the event highlighted the role of local fire departments as more than emer-

gency responders. By engaging in community traditions, Westfield FD continues to strengthen trust and relationships with residents across North Harris County reaffirming its commitment to serving the area with professionalism, dedication, and pride.

KEENEY'S KORNER

Nimitz High's Cornelius Harmon earns 3rd straight Northeast News Coach of Year honors

Continued from Page 1

make right decisions on and off the field."

Harmon admits he has had a special group of players for the last three years. He had 17 he called up to the varsity his first year on the job and now that they are seniors, he will have to say goodbye to them.

He will be without three-year starting QB Albert Brown, star running back Brashard Miles, big-play wide receiver Malachi Augustus and a handful of others who helped turn Nimitz into a consistently winning program.

While he will miss working with those young men, he is looking forward to the challenge of working with a new group of players and continuing the Cougars' winning ways heading into the 2026 season.

"This is going to be a tough offseason because



we've got to see what pieces we have to fill in," Harmon said. "I told the kids who are coming back that it's going to be a tough offseason."

Harmon does have some experience at quarterback as Albert Brown's younger brother Edwin started three games this year after his older brother injured a shoulder early in the season. Harmon is happy to have some experience back at the most important position in the game.

He admitted he will miss this senior class, but

is looking forward to the challenge ahead.

"There's no doubt I'm going to miss them, but it will be fun to see what we have to work with. We are losing eight offensive starters, but we feel we have a good freshman group who will be sophomores next year. They are a pretty solid group, a lot like the 17 we started with when I first got here."

If history is any indication, it appears the Nimitz football program will be in good hands while Harmon is at the helm.

Preseason Look: New Coaches Aim to Rebrand MacArthur Basketball in 2025-26



By John Hickman
HOUSTON — A new era has arrived for MacArthur High School basketball. With both programs under new leadership this season, the Generals and Lady Generals are looking to reset their culture, restore pride, and build toward long-term success.

Over the past three seasons, the boys' program has recorded a record of 33 wins and 67 losses, with one playoff appearance. The girls' team has achieved 31 wins and 62 losses during the same period, also reaching the post-season once. As the 2025-26 season gets underway, the boys have a record of 1-4, while the girls stand at 1-6. However, both teams believe that their records do not accurately reflect the solid foundation being established behind the scenes.

Spencer Brings Fresh Start, Structure to the Generals

MacArthur's boys' basketball program is now led by head coach Shannon Spencer, who brings over 25 years of experience in high school, college, and AAU basketball. His goal since arriving has been to establish a fresh start rooted in discipline, consistency, and commitment.

"Our players are starting to experience structure within the program," Spencer said. "They see the coaches working hard and being prepared every day. The players are beginning to understand the value of consistency and the importance of building good days progressively."

Spencer describes the team's identity in one word: committed. The players are routinely in the gym by 5:30 a.m., embracing what Spencer refers to as the standard for the new era of Generals basketball.

"They have grasped the concept that hard work is undefeated," he said.

The Generals return several key players from last season who have played a vital

role in bringing about this cultural shift. Seniors Andrew Victrum, Frankie Ramirez, Myjah Davis, and Tre Allen lead the veteran group, along with juniors Josh Morales and Henrie Ramirez.

Victrum, a senior guard and the vocal leader of the team, said Spencer's impact has been immediate.

"I love where the program is now," Victrum said. "My goals are to put MacArthur back on the map, win the district, and make a playoff run." He added that he spent the offseason improving his shooting and strength to prepare for a deeper push this



year.

Victrum describes the Generals as "tenacious."

"Our determination is what will win us the district and take us far in the playoffs," he said.

Spencer's message to the MacArthur and Aldine ISD community is straightforward: expect a team that plays with purpose every night.

"MacArthur basketball was once a household name in Houston hoops," he said. "We are working hard to regain that respect."

MacArthur opens district play on Jan. 3 against Aldine.

Dennis and the Lady Generals Look to Grow Together
In her first season as head coach of the Lady Generals, Ashley Dennis acknowledged the challenges of taking over a young team. Now in her 12th year of coaching, she says the players have em-

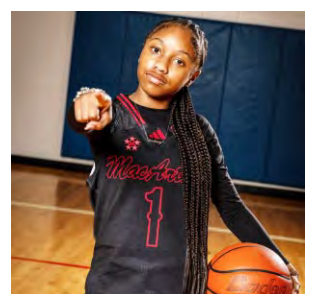
braced the learning curve. "We're growing together," Dennis said. "The girls are eager to learn and buy into the vision."

Despite the newness, Dennis has leaders she trusts to set the tone — starting with senior point guard Cortney Upshaw, the team's floor general.

"As she goes, we go," Dennis said.

Upshaw took significant steps to prepare for her senior season, focusing on conditioning, extra court time, and conquering the new system.

"My motivation is proving people wrong," Upshaw said. "We're the underdogs, and I love that. We get to show everyone what we're capable of."



Upshaw also praised sophomore guard Tatianna Medina, who she says deserves more spotlight for her relentless effort.

Other key contributors include Veronica Jimenez, the team's vocal leader and glue player, and Itzel Guevara, whose athleticism allows her to impact the game on both ends of the floor.

The Lady Generals' message to the community is clear: this program is building something meaningful.

"We're working hard every day to get better while building relationships within our community," Dennis said. "The goal is for MacArthur girls basketball to become a household name not only in Aldine but across the Houston area."

The Lady Generals face the Lady Cougars on Dec. 16, with district play beginning Jan. 3 against Aldine.

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Harris County Emergency Services District No. 2
("District")

The District's administrative office is located at 2727 Allen Parkway, Suite 1100, Houston, Texas 77019.

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CHURCH PAGE

BIBLE WORD SEARCH

by Elie's Spiritual Treasures

Psalm 38:21-22

LORD, do not **forsake** me; do not be **far from** me, my **God**. **Come quickly** to **help** me, my Lord **and** my **Savior**.

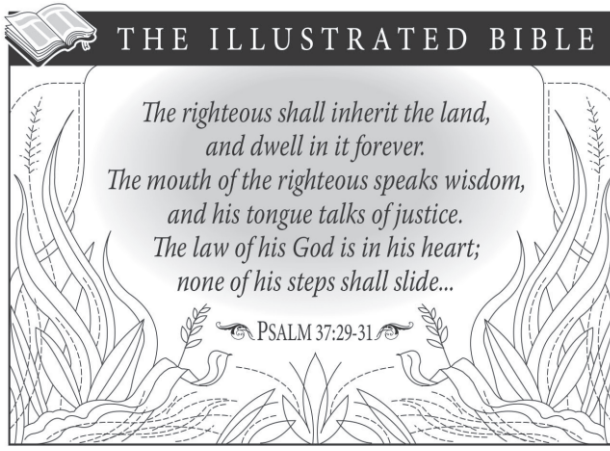
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Find the **bolded/underlined** words in the diagram. They run in all directions — forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

WWW.SEARCHING-FOR-JESUS.COM

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BIBLE TRIVIA

By Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Advent (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. What was the innkeeper's name who turned away the pregnant Mary as there was not room? Eliada, Jesimiel, Phlegon, Bible does not say
3. According to the Gospel of Matthew, the wise men saw the star in the ...? North, East, South, West
4. Jesus was born in Bethlehem of _____ in the days of Herod the king. Nazarene, Jerusalem, Judaea, Capernaum
5. In what type of clothes did Mary wrap the newborn Jesus? Admonishing, Resurrecting, Swaddling, Casting
6. How many times is "swaddling clothes" mentioned in the Bible? 1, 2, 3, 4

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Bible does not say, 3) East, 4) Judaea, 5) Swaddling, 6) 2

Find expanded trivia online with Wilson Casey at www.patron.com/trivia. FREE TRIAL

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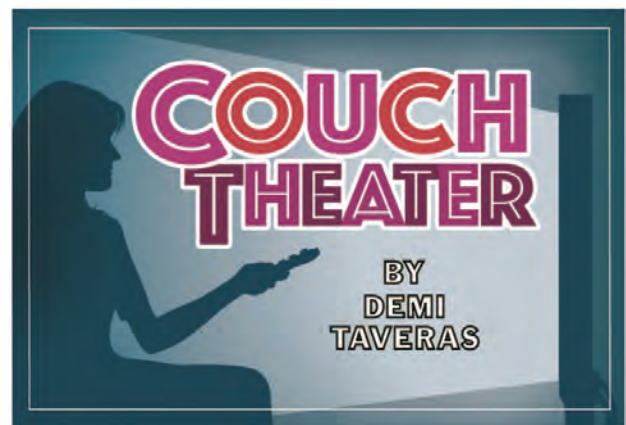
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Aron Paul, left and Elza Gonzalez star in "Ash."

"Ash"

"If I Had Legs, I'd Kick You" (R) — Rose Byrne leads this psychological drama...

to drive anyone insane! (Apple TV+)

"The Copenhagen Test" (TV-MA) — This sci-fi spy thriller series premiered its first season recently...

("Abigail") co-stars. (Peacock)

"A GRAMMY Celebration of Latin Music" (TV-PG) — Out now to stream, this musical event presented by the GRAMMY Awards...

"Ash" (R) — Directed by Flying Lotus, this sci-fi horror film stars Eiza Gonzalez ("Fountain of Youth") and Aaron Paul ("Invincible")...

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HOLLYWOOD by Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD — Original cast member of "Star Trek" George Takei is finally getting his due. "Beam Me Up, Sulu" is a documentary devoted to him...

Takei, now 88, has been "out" since he wed Brad Altman in 2008, making them the first same-sex couple to apply for a marriage license in West Hollywood, California.

Saints preserve us! Surely you didn't think that after "Wicked: For Good" was released, this was the end of it? Composer Stephen Schwartz...

Miley Cyrus received her third Golden Globe nomination, this time for her song in "Avatar: Fire and Ash," called "Dream as One."

The harpoon that Richard Dreyfuss sunk into the deadly white shark in "Jaws" (1975) is hitting an auction block, along with the 130-pound fishing rod...

Sugar meets honey is what you'd have to call Disney joining forces with the Hallmark Channel to make a Christmas movie.



George Takei ("Star Trek")

World Wish Come True" stars the Hallmark queen herself Lacey Chabert, Travis Van Winkle, and Richard Kind.

Actor Josh Lucas (54) has had an illustrious acting career, including hit films such as "American Psycho," "A Beautiful Mind," "Hulk," and most recently "Ford v Ferrari."

He met ABC meteorologist Brianna Ruffalo (34) on the set of the first season of "Palm Royale," and they were wed this July in the Vatican City.

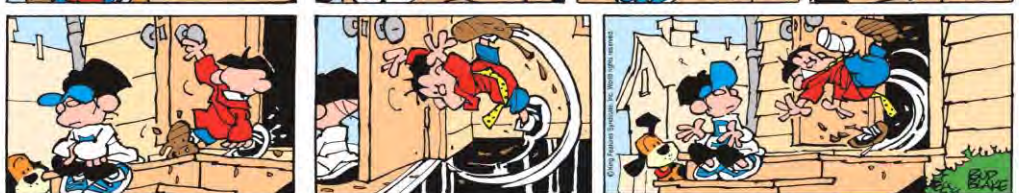
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ENTERTAINMENT

December 1, 2025 Posting Date

King Crossword

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU grid and difficulty instructions

HOCUS-FOCUS comic strip with a 'Find at least six differences' puzzle

Crossword grid and list of clues (ACROSS and DOWN)

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez with 10 questions and answers

Answers to King Crossword and Trivia Test

East Aldine District 2025 Partner Awards

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

A 40-year East Aldine resident whose generosity, kindness, and time embody the heart of service.

Education Partner Award Ana Moros, Lone Star College

For tirelessly supporting students and expanding access to financial aid and educational opportunities.

Deputy of the Year Deputy Adán del Fierro, Harris County Sheriff's Office

For exemplary service, proactive policing, and dedication beyond the call of duty.

Board Choice Award Daniel Meza, AldineVotes

For mentoring youth, mobilizing volunteers, and uplifting community voices.

Chairman's Award Judy Rodríguez, Friends of the Library

For a lifetime of kindness, advocacy, and love for literacy and community service.

Lifetime Achievement Awards Susan Hill

For decades of leadership in neighborhood development and community capacity-building.

David Hawes
For visionary leadership and financial stewardship since the District's founding.

In his welcoming remarks, Executive Director Richard Cantu said the following:

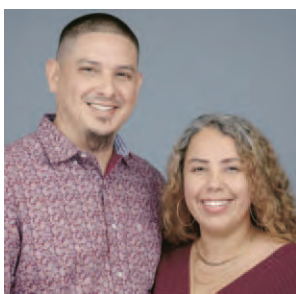


"As 2025 comes to a close, I want to thank the residents, businesses, partners, and leaders who continue to invest in East Aldine. The progress we've made this year did not happen by chance — it happened because people care deeply about this community and are willing to show up, collaborate, and lead with heart.

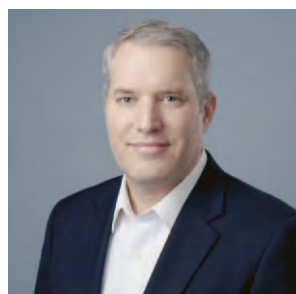
From strengthening public safety and infrastructure to supporting education, health, and small businesses, our work is rooted in one goal: making East Aldine not just a place on the map, but a place we are proud to call home. As we prepare to celebrate the District's 25th anniversary in 2026, we do so with gratitude for how far we've come and optimism for what lies ahead.

The future of East Aldine is bright — because of you.

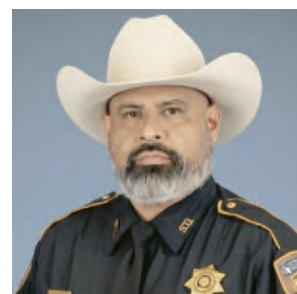
East Aldine District Award Recipients



Community Partner Award
David & Nataly DeLeon, Break'N Bread
For four years of service, outreach, and genuine care for children and families through food, events, and community engagement.



Public Health Partner Award
Jon Schwartz, Harris County Public Health
For improving the quality of life by addressing public health and nuisance issues across East Aldine.



Public Safety Partner Award
Sergeant José Díaz, Harris County Sheriff's Office
For leadership, professionalism, and commitment to keeping our community safe.



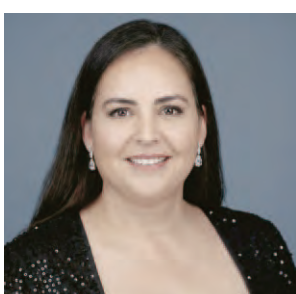
Business Partner of the Year
Greater Northside Chamber of Commerce
For empowering small businesses through training, networking, and economic opportunity.

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Governmental Partner of the Year
Myriam Saldivar
For more than 15 years of dedicated public service and advocacy for the Aldine/North Houston community.



Volunteer of the Year
Norma Mares
A 40-year East Aldine resident whose generosity, kindness, and time embody the heart of service.



Education Partner Award
Ana Moros, Lone Star College
For tirelessly supporting students and expanding access to financial aid and educational opportunities.



Deputy of the Year
Deputy Adán del Fierro, Harris County Sheriff's Office
For exemplary service, proactive policing, and dedication beyond the call of duty.



Board Choice Award
Daniel Meza, AldineVotes
For mentoring youth, mobilizing volunteers, and uplifting community voices.



Chairman's Award
Judy Rodríguez, Friends of the Library
For a lifetime of kindness, advocacy, and love for literacy and community service.



Lifetime Achievement Award
Susan Hill
For decades of leadership in neighborhood development and community capacity-building.



Lifetime Achievement Award
David Hawes
For visionary leadership and financial stewardship since the District's founding.

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