

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Zydeco Festival 1, 8
- Library News 2
- Job Shadow Day 3
- Aldine Talks 3
- Census Immigration 4
- Church Page 6
- Dental Insurance 6
- Entertainment 7
- We-Cycle Wednesdays ... 8
- LSC Register for Full Year 8

NORTHEAST NEWS

Serving the Neighborhoods of Aldine, Greenspoint, US59 Eastex, Beltway 8 and North Forest for over 50 Years
 VOL. 50, NO. 5 TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

New Owner to Renew Haverstock Hills Apartments Fresh Start promised for Troubled Housing Project

Fairstead Announces Acquisition and Rehabilitation of 700-Unit Affordable Housing

EAST ALDINE – Fairstead, a leading national real estate company committed to creating, preserving and improving high-quality affordable housing, has announced the \$242 million acquisition and rehabilitation of Haverstock Hills Apartments, a 700-unit affordable housing community in Houston's East Aldine neighborhood. Haverstock Hills will undergo sweeping renovations, including in-residence, exterior and common area upgrades, as well as enhanced amenities to modernize the prop-

erty and improve operating efficiencies. Fairstead will also invest heavily in new safety and security measures across the property to improve resident wellbeing and families' overall experience.

The acquisition and rehabilitation of Haverstock Hills reinforces Fairstead's commitment to creating thriving, affordable communities in high-demand markets where families feel safe, connected and supported. With this purchase, Fairstead's Houston portfolio now includes nearly 2,000 affordable homes, while its national footprint spans more than 27,000 residences across 28 states.

"Our team has made meaningful investments in



Haverstock Hills Apartments, a 700-unit affordable housing community in Houston's East Aldine, will be renovated by new owners.

the city of Houston this year, growing our footprint to close to 2,000 homes in one of the nation's fastest growing metro areas," said Jeffrey Goldberg, CEO of Fairstead. "As long-term stewards of our communities, we aim to substantially improve resident

well-being at Haverstock Hills Apartments, using stabilized, quality housing as a means to deliver services and programs that uplift residents and improve communities."

"Houston continues to experience strong in-migration population growth

and economic resiliency," said Allan Izzo, Senior Director, Development, Fairstead. "We look forward to our ongoing collaboration with city officials and community partners to identify pathways to narrow the housing affordability gap for essential

workers and growing families in the area."

Located at 5619 Aldine Bender Road, Haverstock Hills comprises 44 two- and three-story buildings spanning 22 acres. Residences include a mix of studios, one-, two- and three-bedroom units. All homes are supported by project-based Section 8 contracts and governed by Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) affordability restrictions. The community is 100% reserved for residents earning 60% and below the Area Median Income (AMI).

Under Fairstead's ownership and management, Haverstock Hills will undergo a comprehensive re-

Continued. See RENEW HAVERSTOCK HILLS, Page 2

NEWS NOTES

New: We-Cycle Wednesdays at East Aldine Recycling Center

Every third Wednesday of the Month, the East Aldine Recycling Center will accept All East Aldine Residents without an appointment. You will need to bring a photo ID, as well as a water, electric, or gas bill as proof of residency in East Aldine. LOCATION: 2789 Hopper Road, Houston 77093. See more INFO on Page 8.

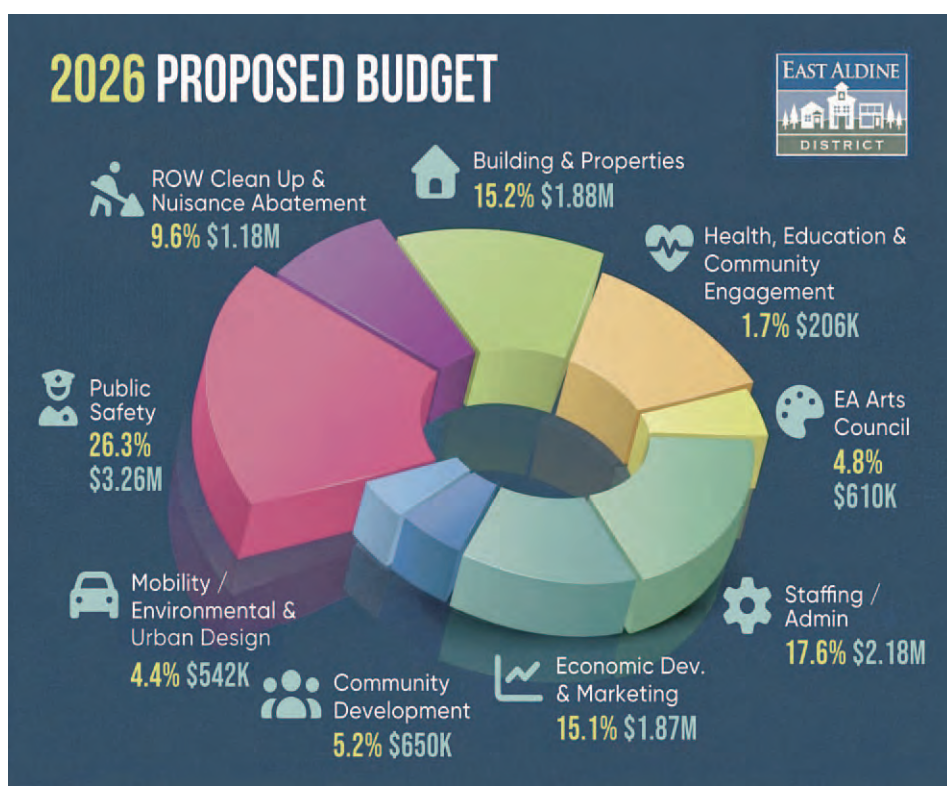
RECAP: East Aldine January Board Meeting

East Aldine Management District Kicks off 25th Year With Park Progress, Neighborhood Upgrades, and Community-backed Programs

This post is also available in ~Español (Spanish)

With a new year underway and its 25th anniversary now officially here, the East Aldine Management District opened 2026 by underscoring a message board members repeated in different ways throughout the Jan. 27 meeting: much of EAMD's work is visible across East Aldine.

"This year will be special," Board Chairman Carlos Silva told attendees as he called the meeting to order. Celebrating 25 years, he said, is also about recognizing the people and



partnerships that have shaped the EAMD's progress — and inviting residents to stay involved. Committee meetings, he noted, are where "a lot of the work actually gets done."

Below are key updates from the meeting.

A 25-year milestone — and a focus on what comes next

Silva framed the anniversary as both a celebration and a commitment.

"We are very much excited about lifting up this entire community," he said, "but most of all, the residents of this community throughout the year."

EAMD leaders also previewed a busier-than-usual season ahead, including

Continued. See RECAP JANUARY BOARD MEETING, Page 5

Teen shot in the neck at Shopping Center on Aldine Mail Route

Unknown Assailant sought by Deputies

By David Taylor
 Managing Editor

EAST ALDINE – A teen is recovering after being shot in the neck on Thursday night in the shopping center on Aldine Mail Route near the Eastex Freeway.

The call for Harris County Sheriff's deputies came at 7:50 p.m. Thursday concerning a number of shots fired in the parking lot in the 5200 block of Aldine Mail Route in the Food City parking lot in East Aldine.

When HCSO arrived on the scene, the 16-year-old had already been transport-



Several markers on the pavement indicate bullet casings.

ed to a nearby hospital by a bystander in a private vehicle. The bystander returned to the scene.

Numerous shell casings were recovered by deputies, according to Detective Mullins, and one vehicle sustained damage from gunfire.

Officials say no one else was injured in the fray.

No suspect information was available and anyone with information on the shooting is urged to call the Harris County Sheriff's Office at 713-221-6000 or Crime Stoppers at 713-222-8477.

25 County Soccer Fields to be Renovated prior to FIFA

HARRIS COUNTY – Harris County will enhance 25 park facilities around the county and promote youth soccer engagement in the community ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2026™, as part of an agreement that Commissioners Court approved with the Sports Authority Foundation to support the FREEKICKS Soccer Program.

"Growing up in Latin America, I've seen the power of soccer as a common language that can bring people of all backgrounds



County Commissioner Adrian Garcia with FIFA Soccer Ball at announcement.

Continued. See SOCCER FIELDS TO BE RENOVATED, Page 5

NORTHEAST NEWS – Send News Tips and Ad Inquiries to 713-266-3444 or nenewsroom@aol.com

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Renew Haverstock Hills Apartments,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Haverstock Hills Apartments, on Aldine Bender Road

habilitation that includes: In-unit enhancements: New kitchens with energy-efficient stainless-steel appliances, updated countertops and cabinetry, refreshed bathrooms with upgraded fixtures and faucets, new flooring, freshly painted walls and new LED lighting.

Building improvements: Enhanced lighting and electrical systems, window upgrades, façade replacement and repainting and improved entrances.

Mechanical and infrastructure upgrades: Systems improvements to boost operating efficiency and ensure long-term performance.

Additionally, residents will enjoy new amenities that include an updated community building and clubhouse, outdoor playgrounds, upgraded laundry facilities and a business center for resident services. Rainbow Housing Assistance Corporation, a nonprofit organization that provides service-enriched housing programs for residents, will oversee resident programming. Services will include K-12 after-school programming, financial literacy and health programs, career training and other recreational and social activities.

"The Harris County Housing Finance Corporation is thrilled to see the financial close of the 700-unit Haverstock Hills

Apartments. We look forward to building a strong and lasting partnership with Fairstead as they bring their experience, resources, and vision to this much-needed transformative rehabilitation in northeast Harris County." stated Rene Martinez, Executive Director of Harris Co. Housing Finance Corporation & Harris Co. Redevelopment Authority. "Over the next 24 months, the 45-year-old apartment homes and the families that call Haverstock Hills home, will benefit from meaningful, life-changing improvements."

Fairstead will also implement significant security upgrades, including increased lighting, cameras, access control and additional on-site security presence, alongside an enhanced partnership with local law enforcement to further improve safety for residents.

The acquisition of Haverstock Hills Apartments was supported by Fairstead's long-standing financing partner, PNC Multifamily Capital, as

both the debt and equity provider, Harris County Housing Finance Corporation and Rainbow Housing Corporation, who will continue to provide on-site social services.

Across the state of Texas, Fairstead owns and manages nearly 2,000 residences, with Houston serving as its largest market. Renovations at Haverstock Hills Apartments will begin this winter, with completion scheduled for early 2028.

HCC announces Name Change to Houston City College

HOUSTON —After 54 years of service to area students, Houston Community College (HCC) will be known as Houston City College, following a vote of the college's Board of Trustees in regular session.

"This new name reflects our expanding mission of offering baccalaureate degrees while maintaining the value and qualities people know and expect from HCC," said Chancellor Margaret Ford Fisher, Ed.D. "As Houston City College, we will continue to provide quality, affordable instruction through certificates, associate and baccalaureate degrees at a community college price. This new name represents all the communities the

Aldine ISD teacher arrested after reportedly fighting student

ALDINE — An Aldine Independent School District teacher has been arrested and charged after court documents allege she was involved in a physical altercation with a student.

According to court records, Jacenta Keish Green, 43, was charged with injury to a child following an incident at Carver High School on Jan. 14. Investigators say the incident stemmed from an argument involving Green's daughter and another student.

Court documents allege Green followed the student into a school restroom, where a verbal confrontation began, and continued following the student to the cafeteria, where the situation escalated into a physical fight.

Records state Green placed the student in a headlock, and surveillance video allegedly shows Green and her daughter fighting the student, pulling her hair and clothing.

An administrator attempted to intervene, but

court records say Green and her daughter continued the attack.

At one point, documents allege the student tried to disengage, but Green grabbed a chair and attempted to throw it at the student. Green is then accused of attacking the student again, pushing her into a cafeteria bench.

School staff eventually broke up the fight. The student was taken to Urgent Care and treated for injuries to her back, neck, and head, according to court documents. Records also state Green and her daughter left the campus without providing a statement.

Green was charged with injury to a child approximately two weeks after the incident. She is currently being held in the Harris County Jail on a \$10,000 bond.

Aldine ISD provided the following statement regarding the incident: Aldine ISD has conducted a thorough investigation into the physical alterca-

tion involving a teacher and a student at Carver High School that occurred on January 14, 2026. The district immediately placed the teacher on administrative leave and notified local law enforcement and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS).

We are cooperating fully with the Harris County District Attorney's Office and local law enforcement throughout their investigation. The District Attorney has filed felony charges of Injury to a Child against the teacher, and she has been arrested. Aldine ISD maintains a zero-tolerance policy regarding any adult conduct that compromises student safety. The safety and well-being of our students remain our highest priority.

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Toss it into the can. It's a neat idea. RECYCLE



High Meadows Branch Library

UPCOMING EVENTS FEBRUARY

- 16 FEB** 11:30 AM INTRO ESL
- 11:30 AM FABLES AND FUN
- 4 PM CREATION STATION
- 17 FEB** 11:30 AM TODDLER TIME
- 12:45 PM ESL INTERMIDO
- 3 PM GAME ZONE
- 4PM COMPUTER BASIC
- 18 FEB** 12 PM FUTURE U
- 1PM TASTE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE
- 3 PM TOON CAFE
- 3:30 PM KRAFTY KIDS
- 5PM JAZZ A LONG
- 19 FEB** 11:AM CITIZENSHIP CLASS
- 12:45 PM ESL INTERMIDO
- 3:00PM TEEN LOUNGE
- 4 PM MICROSOFT WORD BASIC
- 20 FEB** 3:00PM TOON CAFE
- 21 FEB** 11:AM ESL CLASS LEVEL 1



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THIS CLASS IS FOR PEOPLE WHO ALREADY KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT USING A COMPUTER AND WANT TO LEARN MICROSOFT WORD. WE WILL PRACTICE TYPING, SAVING DOCUMENTS, CHANGING TEXT, ADDING PICTURES, AND USING WORD TOOLS

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IT IS TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS! MAKE A HOLIDAY ART FOR YOUR LOVED ONES THIS WINTER.

AIRLINE LIBRARY NEWS

WIGGLE WEDNESDAY
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Come Move and Groove with Us!
Join us for a fun-filled session of reading, singing, and playful movement!

It's the perfect way to introduce toddlers to the joy of books and reading while building important motor skills. Through music, movement, and play, we'll help support your child's growth in a joyful, engaging way—because play is essential to every part of toddler development!

RESUME WORKSHOP BEGINNERS
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 - 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Ready to Enhance your Resume? and Cover Letter? Take your resume and cover letter to the next level with a Future U advisor who can help you with great insight on how to attract top-notch employers and get their attention. Get great tips on crafting your resume and cover letter to be tailor-made with your skills, qualifications, and experiences. Have one on one talks with Future U advisor about today's job market and how to prepare and what to look for.

COLLEGE AND CAREER ADVISOR
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 - 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Connect with a Future U advisor! Discover the college and career resources around you. To make an appointment, please click on the link below or call. Virtual appointments are also available.

<https://hcpl.net/future>
Lolita R. Butler
FutureU Advisor

Phone: (832) 310-0694
Email: lolita.butler@hcpl.net

TWEEN SPARK STAR JARS
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Learn how to make paper stars and fill a jar with wishes. If you manage to fill the whole thing, some of them are bound to come true, right? Snacks will be provided. This program is best for 6th-9th graders

TEEN CLUB
Thursday, February 19, 2026
5:00 PM – 5:30 PM
5:00 PM – 5:30 PM

Join us every Thursday for a fun hour full of crafts and workshops. Relax, have a snack in a safe and welcoming space!

HOMEWORK HELP/AYUDA CON TAREA
Thursday, February 19, 2026 - 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM

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.

Note: Los bibliotecarios no harán los deberes ni pueden garantizar ninguna calificación; este programa está aquí para ofrecer ayuda respondiendo preguntas.

PATHWAY TO CITIZENSHIP SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2026 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Join us for a free class to help you prepare for your naturalization interview and civics test. You must complete an English placement assessment to join the class. Taking this class will not grant citizenship or pay for any application fees. Registration is required as space is limited.

SPARK 5 STORY TIME W/ THE MICHELLE PROJECT
Saturday, February 21, 2026 - 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Join the library and The Michelle Project for a special Saturday story time! These interactive story times are suitable for all ages and abilities. We'll explore the world of early literacy through singing, talking, writing, playing, and reading! Each super fun educational adventure is inspired by celebrations and traditions from that month. There's always a free book waiting for you at every session!

Bert Barron
Adult Program Specialist
Aldine Branch Library
11331 Airline Dr.
Houston, TX 77037
Phone: 832-927-5410

SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Aldine ISD Launches Aldine Talks: Black History Beyond the Classroom Video Series



In celebration of Black History Month, Aldine ISD is amplifying student voices through the launch of *Aldine Talks: Black History Beyond the Classroom*, a new video series that highlights student-centered storytelling.

The series is an inaugural project coordinated by the Aldine ISD Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Department in collaboration with the 2026 Black History Month Committee and the Aldine ISD Office of Communications. Aldine Talks debuts during Black History Month and replaces the district's former Black History Oratory Competition with a modern, digital platform designed to broaden students' perspectives.

Throughout February, new videos will premiere weekly on the *Aldine ISD YouTube channel*, featuring high school students sharing powerful reflections on Black history, identity, excellence, and lived experience — beyond the classroom walls.

The series launched with a student feature from *Davis High School senior Brandon Whitney*, whose video sets the tone for the monthlong celebration of student voice and storytelling.

Families, staff, and students are encouraged to:
 -Watch the weekly video premieres
 -Like and share the videos to show school pride
 -Engage with student stories throughout Black History Month
 By supporting Aldine Talks, the Aldine community continues its promise to honor history, uplift student voices, and celebrate excellence across the district.
 To follow the series, subscribe to the Aldine ISD YouTube channel and turn on notifications for new releases throughout February.

9 Aldine ISD Magnet Schools Earn National Recognition in 2026 Magnet Schools of America Merit Awards



Aldine Independent School District magnet schools continue to earn national recognition for academic excellence and innovative programming, with several campuses receiving top honors in the 2026 Magnet Schools of America (MSA) Merit Awards.



strengths and thrive.”

While the 2026 awards celebrate current accomplishments, Aldine ISD magnet campuses have a history of national recognition dating back well before 2018. Magnet Schools of America began posting a comprehensive list of winners on its website in 2018, but Aldine ISD schools had already been earning Excellence and Distinction honors in prior years. Campuses such as Kujawa Education Center, Carter Academy, Drew Academy, Grantham Academy for Engineering, Shotwell Middle School, and Reece Academy have been recognized multiple times over the past decade for programs ranging from International Baccalaureate and engineering to fine arts and Montessori education.

The district's magnet programs are part of a broader portfolio of Choice School opportunities available to Aldine ISD families. In addition to magnet schools, students may explore pathways such as P-TECH programs, early college high schools, career and technical education campuses, and neighborhood campuses with specialized programming.

The announcement comes during National School Choice Week and as Aldine ISD prepares for 2026-2027 student registration. District officials encourage families to explore the full range of academic options designed to match students' interests, talents, and career goals.

Magnet Schools of America, a national non-profit organization that supports and promotes magnet schools, annually recognizes campuses across the country through its Merit Awards program. The awards highlight schools that demonstrate a commitment to high academic standards, diversity, specialized curriculum, and strong community engagement.

2026 Magnet Schools of Excellence

Three Aldine ISD campuses earned the highest distinction — the Magnet Schools of Excellence Award:

- Carter Academy for Performing and Visual Arts (Grades 1-5)
- Carver High School for Applied Technology, Engineering & the Arts (Grades 9-12)
- Shotwell Middle School (Grades 6-8) — International Baccalaureate® Middle Years Program

2026 Magnet Schools of Distinction

Five additional Aldine ISD campuses earned Magnet Schools of Distinction honors:

- Anderson Academy for Fine Arts (Grades 1-4) — Visual and Performing Arts

- Grantham Academy for Engineering (Grades 6-8) — Biomedical, Chemical, Civil, and Mechanical Engineering

- Houston Academy (Grades 5-6) — Fine Arts
- Kujawa Education Center (Kujawa EC/PreK/K School and Kujawa Elementary; Prekindergarten-Grade 5) — IB® Primary Years Program

- Reece Academy (Pre-kindergarten-Kindergarten) — Montessori, Direct Instruction, and Fine Arts

District leaders said the continued recognition reflects Aldine ISD's longstanding commitment to providing families with meaningful school choice options and specialized academic pathways.

“These national recognitions are a testament to the dedication of our educators, the creativity of our students, and the partnership of our families,” said Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney. “In Aldine ISD, we believe every child deserves access to programs that ignite their passions and prepare them for the future. Our magnet and choice schools are an important part of the #AldineStory, offering pathways in the arts, engineering, international studies, and more, so students can discover their

Blanson CTE Students Step Behind the Scenes of Hospitality Careers on Groundhog Job Shadow Day



A group of Blanson CTE High School students pose with the Westin Houston Downtown staff.

Nine Aldine ISD students from Blanson Career and Technology Education High School spent Groundhog Job Shadow Day not predicting the weather, but exploring their futures inside two of Houston's premier hotels.

The hospitality students participated in the statewide career exploration initiative coordinated by the Texas Hotel & Lodging Association, visiting The Westin Houston Memorial City and The Westin Houston Downtown on Feb. 2. Guided by hospitality and tourism instructors Dr. Ashley Ingraham and Eric Howard, students received an in-depth look at how hotels operate behind the scenes.

During the four-hour experience, students rotated through multiple departments, including front office, guest services, housekeeping, food and beverage, sales and marketing, catering and events, and engineering. Visiting two separate properties allowed students to compare how hotels serve different markets while upholding consistent brand standards.

At The Westin Houston Memorial City, hotel leaders shared professional knowledge and career guidance, underscoring teamwork, leadership, and attention to detail. General Manager Pete Ells encouraged students to focus



Trevor Finnan explains the AAA Diamond Ratings, which reflect quality, facilities, and hospitality in lodging options for members.

on excellence in their current roles as the foundation for lasting growth and leadership.

“Experiencing a working hotel firsthand allows them to see that hospitality is not simply about service, but about leadership, operations, and building environments where people feel appreciated and welcomed,” Ingraham said.

Students said the opportunity enhanced their understanding of the industry.

“I was surprised by the teamwork and cooperation among staff members behind the scenes,” said Camila Garza. “I always thought hotels were mostly about processing check-ins for guests. I grasped the importance of each department's role in making a welcoming experience.”

For Vanessa Rodriguez, the human resources department stood out. “It showed how much plan-

ning goes into hiring, training, and scheduling employees,” she said.

Others left with revived confidence in their career goals. “Seeing professionals working in the hotel environment helped me realize that hospitality offers real career opportunities with room for growth,” said Daisy López, who hopes to one day become a general manager.

Groundhog Job Shadow Day served as a real-world extension of Blanson CTE's hospitality curriculum, reinforcing classroom instruction while promoting college, career, and workforce readiness for Aldine ISD students.

“One piece of advice that really stayed with me was to always focus on excellence in whatever role you are given,” said Katherine Batalla. “Doing your best now prepares you for bigger leadership opportunities later. Hard work pays off.”




Possible Career Pathways

- Business Manager
- Human Resources Manager
- Concierge
- Facilities Planning Manager
- Food Services Manager
- Hospitality Administrator
- Hotel/Motel Manager
- Meetings and Convention Planner
- Reservation and Ticket Agent/Travel Clerk
- Restaurant Manager
- Travel Agent
- Travel Guide
- Event Planner
- Destinations Manager
- Director of Convention and Tourism Bureau
- Sales Director
- Catering and Banquet Manager
- Executive Housekeeper
- Director of Operations



OPINION PAGE

OPINION
By **BILL KING**



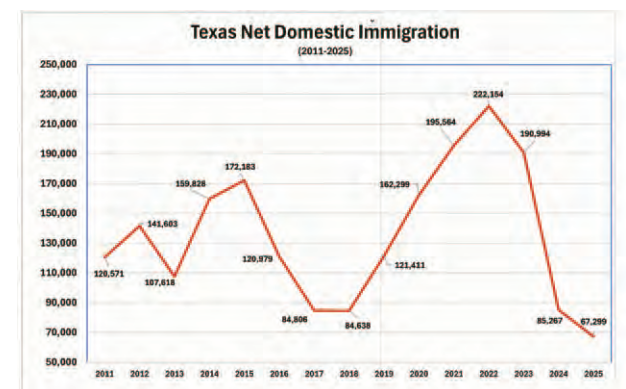
Census Shows Texas Growth is Slowing

The U.S. Census Bureau released its population estimates for 2025. This is a bit of an odd year because the annual estimates are made as of July 1 each year. So, this estimate straddles the Biden and Trump administrations and their very different immigration policies.

Texas added 391,000 new residents, more than any other state. It added almost double Florida's increase, which ranked second. The percentage growth of only three states (the Carolinas and Idaho) was higher than Texas.

However, the increase in Texas' population last year was down by over 43% from the previous year (599,000/391,000). Unpacking the numbers strongly suggests this downturn is likely to continue.

A little under half of Texas' growth came from international immigration (167,000 or 43%). Natural change (i.e., births minus deaths) was unchanged from last year at 157,000. Domestic immigration into Texas from other states fell to 67,000, the lowest level since 2010, and was down 70% from its 2022 high. We saw a precipitous decline in domestic migration into Texas last year (191,000/85,000). Those in the demographic community have been wondering whether last year's decline was the beginning of a trend or a one-time anomaly. The new data would seem to suggest the former.



Of course, the most important question is what is really going on with international immigration. The Census Bureau estimates that international immigration nationwide fell by more than half last year (2.7 million 1.3 million). With the dramatic change in immigration policy that the new administration has implemented, one would expect that most of the net positive immigration occurred in the last half of 2024. If the Trump administration continues its current immigration policies, it is not unreasonable to speculate that net international immigration next year could be zero or even negative.


We know that natural population growth is on the wane. Before the pandemic, we were having roughly a million more babies born every year in the U.S. than people dying. With the surge of fatalities during the pandemic, the natural increase dropped dramatically. But even now, it is still coming in at only about half the pre-pandemic level. The CBO has projected that 2030 will be the last year the U.S. has a positive natural increase.

The decline in international immigration will further reduce natural growth because immigrant mothers contribute to a significant share of births. Over the last decade, about 40% of births in Harris County were to mothers not born in the U.S.

So, every factor affecting population growth in Texas is slowing, and that deceleration likely to continue. The plain fact is that the halcyon days of never-ending growth in Texas are rapidly coming to an end.

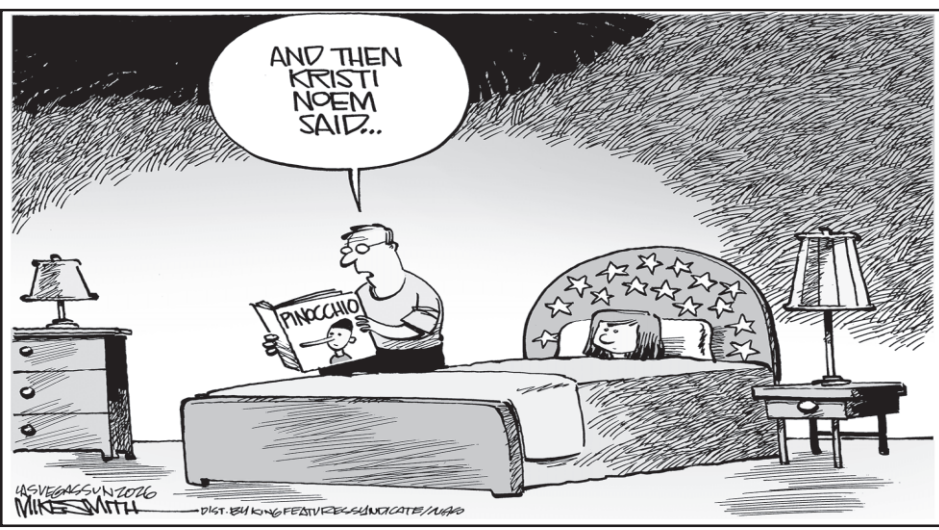
EDITOR'S NOTE: Opinions expressed here are not necessarily that of this newspaper or its staff. YOUR OPINION is welcome. Send a letter for possible publication to Grafikpress Newspapers, 5906 Star Lane, Houston TX 77057 or an email to GRAFIKSTAR@aol.com. Please limit your words to about 200. Letters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

Americanisms



"Never worry about the size of your Christmas tree. In the eyes of children, they are all 30 feet tall."
— Larry Wilde

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STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By **Gary Borders**



Early Voting Begins Feb. 17

Early voting in the March 3 primary begins Monday, Feb. 17 and concludes on Friday, Feb. 27. A full slate of contested races will be on the ballots in both Republican and Democratic primaries. The deadline to request a mail ballot is Feb. 20, according to votetexas.gov.

One of the most closely watched statewide races for both parties are the primary races for U.S. Senator. Incumbent GOP Sen. John Cornyn faces two challengers: Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and U.S. Rep. Wesley Hunt, R-Houston. On the Democratic side, U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett, D-Dallas, faces state Rep. James Talarico, D-Round Rock. There are many other contested races on the ballot as well.

Voters can access election information, find out if they are registered to vote, and obtain other pertinent information at votetexas.gov.

MORE THAN 30K VOUCHER APPLICATION ON FIRST DAY

More than 30,000 school voucher applications were submitted last week on the first day of the state's new program to give families taxpayer-funded accounts for private school tuition and home-schooling expenses, the Houston Chronicle reported. The applications will be accepted until March 17 and are not first-come, first-served.

The Legislature provided \$1 billion in funding for the program's first year, which is projected to support up to 100,000 accounts. If it receives more applications than can be funded, an income- and disability-based lottery will be held to determine which families receive vouchers.

"When parents have more options, students have more opportunity — and that's a win for Texas," acting Comptroller Kelly Hancock said in a news release.

Officially called Texas Education Freedom Accounts, the program is being administered by the state comptroller's office and Odyssey, a New York-based tech contractor.

SCHOOL WALKOUTS COULD TRIGGER TEA PROBES

A rash of student walkouts in Texas to protest the ongoing ICE crackdown in Minnesota has prompted the Texas Education Agency to warn school districts they could face investigations and possible loss of funding, The Dallas Morning News reported. In a letter sent last week to school districts, the agency warned that students must be marked as absent, with schools risking loss of daily attendance funding. It stated that teachers or school systems who "facilitate walkouts" will be subject to investigation and sanction.



After thousands of students from 14 campuses in the Austin ISD left class to protest ICE activity, Greg Abbott called on Education Commissioner Mike Morath to investigate.

"AISD gets taxpayer dollars to teach the subjects required by the state, not to help students skip school to protest," he wrote on X. "Our schools are for educating our children, not political indoctrination."

Besides Austin, several school districts in and around the Dallas-Fort Worth area experienced student walkouts. Organizers pointed out that protests are protected speech, with the harshest consequence being an unexcused absence.

STATE BACK IN COURT SOON OVER NO AC IN PRISONS

Texas will soon return to federal court to defend not providing air conditioning in many of its prisons, according to the Texas Standard. The plaintiffs include advocacy groups and incarcerated individuals, who claim that the heat levels in un-air-conditioned prisons constitute cruel and unusual punishment.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice argues that the prison system needs more funding and resources. Two-thirds of the state's 103 prison facilities lack air conditioning in cell blocks and dorms. Temperatures inside those prisons often rise above 90 degrees, according to readings now required by law.

"There is no mitigation measure other than air conditioning that can protect people from death or sickness due to the heat," attorney Erica Grossman said. "People living in Texas prisons should not be subjected to conditions we won't even subject animals to."

County jails are required to keep temperatures between 65 and 85 degrees. Animal shelters also have heat rules.

MEASLES CASES REPORTED IN DILLEY IMMIGRANT CENTER, WEST TEXAS

Two detainees at the family immigration center in Dilley, 70 miles south of San Antonio, have "active measles infections," federal and state officials said. The Texas Tribune reported some migrants have been quarantined at the nation's only family detention center. More than 1,400 people are being held at the facility.

A Department of Homeland Security spokesperson said medical officials were monitoring detainees and taking "appropriate and active steps to prevent further infection."

"All detainees are being provided with proper medical care," Tricia McLaughlin said.

The Texas Department of State Health Services is collaborating with DHS to determine the number of vaccine doses needed for the Dilley facility. DSHS has also reported three confirmed measles cases in Reeves and Ward counties among non-Texas residents who spent time there.

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease spread through coughing, sneezing or simply being near an infected person. The MMR vaccine is considered the most effective way to prevent measles.

TEA HIRES INSPECTOR GENERAL TO INVESTIGATE TEACHERS

The Texas Education Agency announced last week that it has hired an inspector general to oversee the agency's growing number of investigations into the conduct of Texas teachers, the Chronicle reported. Levi Fuller, a former chief of staff to state Rep. Andy Hopper, R-Decatur.

"With more than a decade of experience holding bad actors accountable, Levi will help root out the flawed few that sew distrust among families and school communities while helping to restore confidence in the teaching profession," Education Commissioner Mike Morath said.

TEA investigations can result in teachers being placed on the "Do Not Hire" list, dismissal, or suspension of teaching licenses. The most serious cases are vetted by the State Board of Educator Certification.

RRC COMPLETES DIGITIZATION OF 100 MILLION RECORDS

The Texas Railroad Commission recently surpassed digitizing more than 100 million oil and gas records, making nearly a century's worth of documents available online.

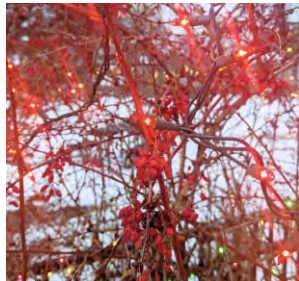
"Digitizing 100 million records represents a significant achievement in the Railroad Commission's ability to better serve Texans, streamlining access to our vast library of files and continuing to expand our modernization efforts," said Wei Wang, Executive Director of the RRC.

Digitized records are available on the RRC's website at <https://tinyurl.com/yh4e6bf5>.

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**

The Seasons



I woke up late at night and saw the falling snow.

In the middle of the night, the weather had changed. Snow began to fall. Large flakes hovered and floated in front of the streetlights as they fell, and soon the ground was coated.

Normally, I would be in Mexico by now. But with my book coming out, we stayed a bit longer. And now I'm glad we did, because two nights ago, my Uncle Andy died. He was 94.

Yesterday, I went with my mother and father, my aunt, my sister and four cousins to meet with the funeral director. He was surprised. He had to scout up more chairs. That's when we told him my Uncle Les would also be joining us by phone.

This winter was a tough season for Andy.

First, he had to move from the family farmhouse, where he spent the last 77 years of his life, to an assisted living apartment. Andy did not want to move. He wanted to stay at the farm. He wanted to die at the farm. He consented to leaving only after his wife, Bea, who will soon turn 94 herself, was diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Andy always thought he would die before Bea. But now it was looking as if Bea would go before him—something he never imagined—and they both had to leave the old farmhouse to move into this new, small space. Bea was released from the hospital, and my cousins decorated the new apartment with furniture and pictures from the farmhouse to make them feel at home. Andy complained more or less nonstop about the changes. And he joked. Andy always told jokes, even when he was grumpy.

But neither Andy nor Bea spent much time in that little apartment.

Bea quickly grew worse. She had some small strokes, and she became confused. She started wandering the hallways, and the folks at the home said she'd need to move downstairs to memory care. This meant Andy would also move into a new apartment just a few doors down from Bea.

"I have to move again?" he asked, astonished. He had still not fully settled into the new apartment.

My mother explained that he did so he could be close to Bea.

"But I like this place!" Andy said. This was news to everyone.

Plans were made to move him the next day, but that night, he took a bad fall. He was taken to the hospital. He had broken two vertebrae in his neck. They didn't recommend surgery at 94. In the middle of the night, he died in his sleep.

"I don't think he wanted to go through all that," my mom said. "Not without Bea."

"He ended up dying first, like he thought he would," I said.

So yesterday, we had a mini family reunion in the funeral director's office, then my mother and her sister and a cousin went to tell Bea that her husband had died. My mother said she thought Bea understood—at least for a moment.

"How old was he?" Bea asked. Then she asked about the weather. Then she asked again.

I was thinking about all of this, watching the snow fall in the middle of the night. Sometimes, when I'm in Mexico, I miss the changing of the seasons. This year, I am here as witness. There's nothing I can do, nothing I can change. But somehow being here to observe the change is good. It makes the changes real. And it reminds me of how very short the days are.

Till next time,
Carrie

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RECAP: East Aldine January Board Meeting

Continued from Page 1

community activity tied to the World Cup this summer.

Financial update: strong revenue and continued investment

Cynthia Craig with Governmental Financial Reporting reported EAMD ended 2025 with about \$15.5 million in total revenue — above budget — while spending less than projected in several categories.

“Our interest income was very nice for this past year,” Craig said, as she walked board members through year-end totals and reserve balances.

Executive Director Richard Cantú later emphasized the EAMD’s approach: “Really proud of the continued stewardship of our resources,” he said, crediting the board, staff, and financial team.

Parks and public spaces: Keith Wiess Park transitions to county management

A major quality-of-life update arrived in the form of a long-anticipated transition: **Keith Wiess Park has been transferred to Harris County Precinct 2** for maintenance and management.

“That means we’ll have a cleaner, safer park,” Cantú said, noting the shift is expected to bring more frequent patrols and a higher level of routine maintenance. He also said the EMAD will continue working through details connected to areas retained by the city and ongoing safety concerns in wooded sections of the park.

Neighborhood infrastructure: sewer projects, expansions, and help for septic repairs

EAMD leaders shared updates on projects that aren’t always “headline visible,” but directly affect household health and neighborhood stability.

Sewer construction and extensions

Cantú said the **Westfield Estates Sewer Project** is nearing completion, with paving finished on Seven Mile Road and Shady Lane Road and residents begin-

ning the sign-up process for connections.

“We’ve had dozens of residents come out to the office,” he said, describing the steps homeowners must complete, including notarized easements for contractor access.

The board also approved engineering agreements for the **Castledale Drive Sanitary Sewer Extension**, a project tied to the 2026 grant cycle.

“It’s gonna be a big relief for those people out there,” Vice Chair Reyes García said.

Help for homeowners with failing septic systems

The board approved up to \$10,000 to help eligible residents participating in the Houston-Galveston Area Council on-site sewage facility program, specifically to fund **property surveys** that many homeowners lack and cannot easily afford.

“Without that survey, they can’t follow through with the rest of the program,” project coordinator Danny Benavides told the board, explaining the request would help about seven to 10 households take the next step toward repairs or replacement.

The EAMD counsel emphasized the plan’s public-purpose structure, recommending an interlocal agreement with H-GAC rather than direct payments to homeowners.

“It’s for the public purposes — health, environmental, etc.,” the attorney said.

Public safety: monthly activity report

A representative from the Harris County Sheriff’s Office shared the month’s public safety activity, including arrests, warrants, calls for service, and traffic stops. The department also noted ongoing patrols in key park areas.

Community programs and school partnerships: investing in students and families

Several public comments highlighted a theme that often appears in EAMD meetings: community investments extend beyond infrastructure.

Judy Rodríguez, president of the High Meadows Library Friends and resident, thanked the EAMD for approving a book purchase that helped families at a December event.

“The turnout was extraordinary,” she said, noting nearly 170 people attended.

Two staff members, Larisa Castillo and Rita Gaston, from Orange Grove Elementary shared appreciation for the ongoing partnership with schools serving East Aldine students.

“I love it,” Gaston told the board, reflecting on years spent working in the community. “Whatever I can do to make our school better, I’m here for it.”

Later, the board approved \$12,000 for Orange Grove Elementary’s “Prize Patrol” incentive program, designed to encourage student growth and celebrate progress.

Events and community engagement: Zydeco festival and vaccine access

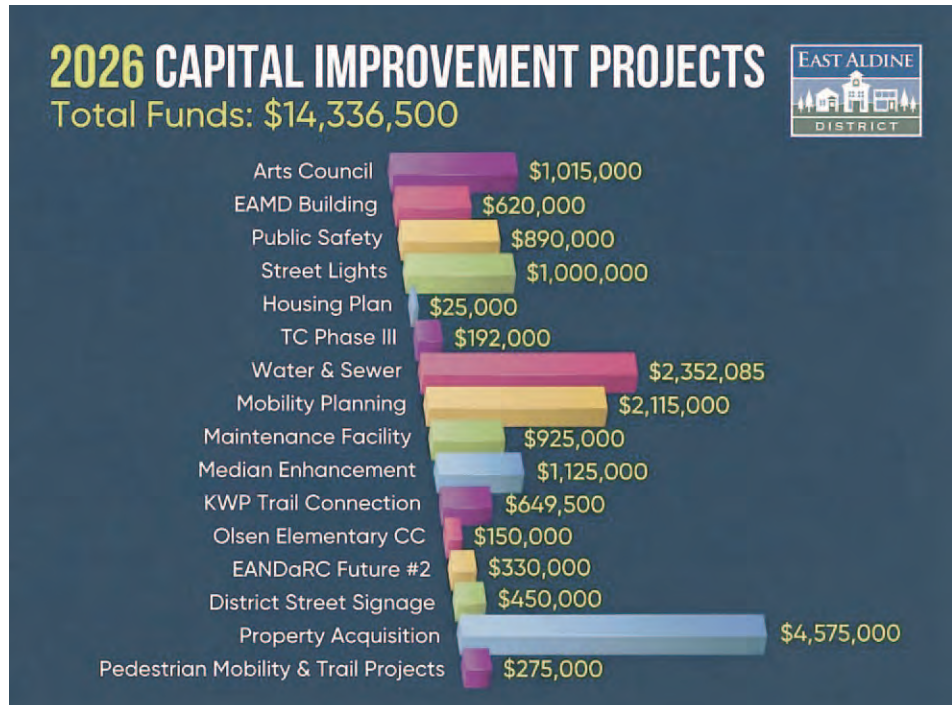
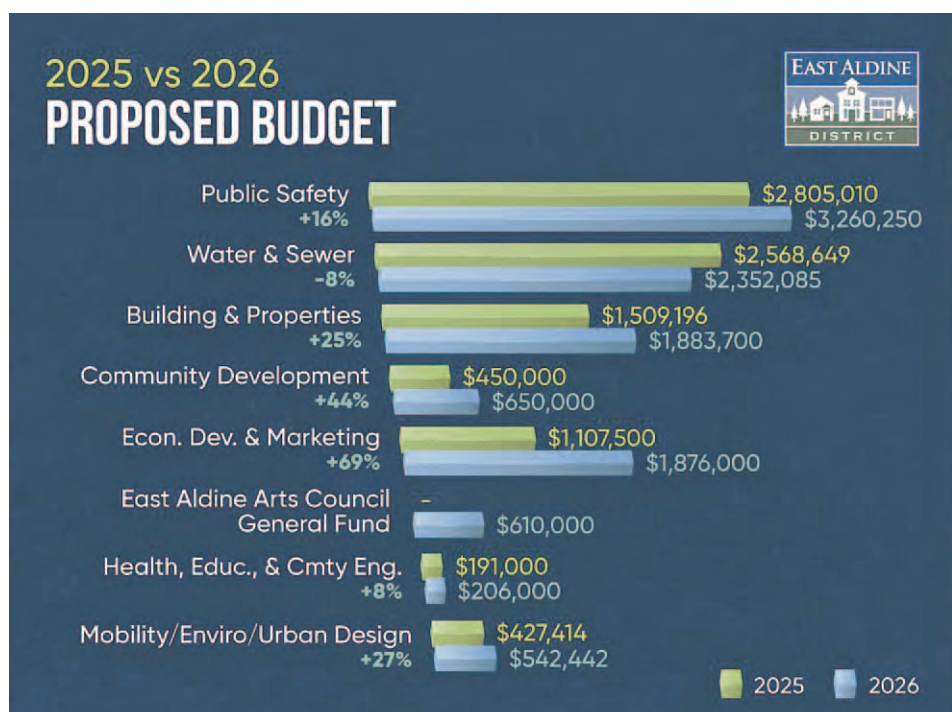
The board approved up to \$50,000 for upcoming events, including the EAMD’s **2nd annual Zydeco Music Festival on Feb. 20**.

In health outreach, committee members discussed a recent flu vaccine event hosted by Hope Clinic at BakerRipley. While the weather limited turnout, organizers said remaining EAMD-sponsored vaccines will continue to be available to uninsured patients.

Branding update: widely liked — but not always understood

In one of the meeting’s most candid discussions, Mila Clarke shared early findings from the EAMD’s branding and marketing study: the EAMD is well-regarded, but many residents don’t fully understand what it does.

“We’ve never encountered a brand so universally loved,” Clarke said. But she added that the research also shows “confusion between you and other local entities,” and that residents may attend events or benefit from improvements “without realizing that the EAMD is



really behind” the work.

“Events feel really visible,” she said, “and other things that are really important feel more invisible.”

The community survey is available in English and Spanish to encourage broader participation.

Gateway art project: “50% complete,” with strong public response

The board also received an update on the Gateway art installation at Little York and Hwy. 59 from UpArt Studio.

The project is “approximately 50% complete,” Elia Quiles with

UpArt Studio told the board, citing weather and TxDOT holiday schedules as factors affecting workdays. Even so, the team reported strong organic community interest online.

“Early public response has been strong,” Quiles said, sharing that a social media post about the work reached significant engagement.

A projected completion date remains mid-to-late February.

What’s next

EAMD leaders previewed several next steps residents may see in the coming weeks and months,

including the creation of a **Community Beautification and Cleanup Committee**, continued **infrastructure work**, and **progress toward planning for Town Center Phase 3**.

As the EAMD moves through its anniversary year, the board’s opening invitation remained consistent: **stay engaged, follow the work, and take part** — because the decisions made in the meeting room are meant to show up on the street, in parks, and in neighborhoods across East Aldine.

County to Renovate 25 Soccer Fields,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

together and empower communities. Not only will the FIFA World Cup bring an incredible economic impact to our community, but it will help us improve our park infrastructure and further unite Harris County around a common language: soccer. I’m grateful to the Sports Authority Foundation and the Houston Host City Community for giving back to our community ahead of the World Cup this summer,” said **Judge Lina Hidalgo**.

The Sports Authority Foundation and the FIFA World Cup 2026™ Houston Host City Committee have identified 25 fields in Harris County for improvement as part of the FREEKICKS program:

Precinct 1: Alabonson Park (3 fields) and Blue

Ridge Park (2 fields)

Precinct 2: Moody Park (4 fields) and Keith-Wiess Park (4 fields) through an interlocal agreement with the City of Houston

Precinct 3: Will build 8 new soccer fields at Baytown Soccer Complex

Precinct 4: George Bush Park (4 fields)

By repairing and building soccer fields across the county, Harris County will help grow the next generation of soccer players and engage underserved youth ages 6-18 in an important global cultural event.

Harris County will host seven matches as a host city for the FIFA World Cup 2026™ this summer. The games are expected to generate approximately \$1.5 billion in revenue (the economic equivalent of

hosting seven Super Bowls) and bring more than 500,000 visitors from all over the world to Harris County, according to the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority.

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo is Harris County’s chief executive and Director of the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Judge Hidalgo, alongside four county precinct commissioners, oversees a budget of approximately \$5 billion that funds services and institutions for the third-largest county in the nation, home to nearly 5 million people. For more information about Harris County and the Office of the County Judge, please visit: cjo.harriscountytexas.gov.

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BIBLE WORD SEARCH

by Elie's Spiritual Treasures

Psalm 40:4b-5a

who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods. Many LORD my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you have planned for us.

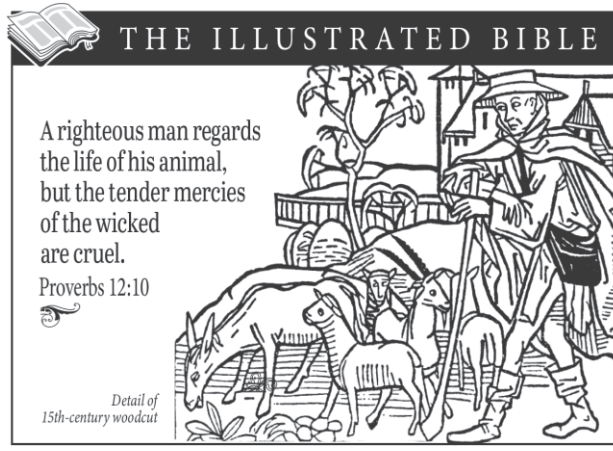
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Find the **bolded/underlined** words in the diagram. They run in all directions — forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

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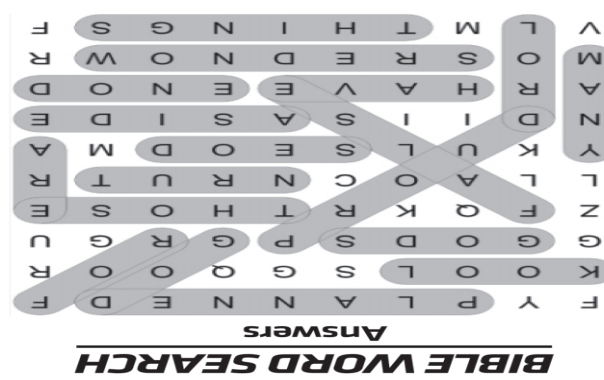


BIBLE TRIVIA

By Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Simeon (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. Whose first chapter begins, "Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab"? Exodus, II Kings, Job, Proverbs
3. From Luke 1, what was the name of Elisabeth and Zacharias' child? Elisabeth, Zacharias, Thomas, John
4. In Genesis 4, who's considered the father of all musicians? Jeremiah, Joash, Jubal, Job
5. From Luke 7, where did Jesus raise a widow's son from the dead? Amos, Nain, Lystra, Philippi
6. In Genesis 12, where did Abram go after leaving Ur? Iconium, Nineveh, Haran, Salem

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) II Kings, 3) John (the Baptist), 4) Jubal, 5) Nain, 6) Haran
 More than 1,200 brand-new trivia questions in Wilson Casey's latest book "Quest for Bible Knowledge" available in bookstores and online.
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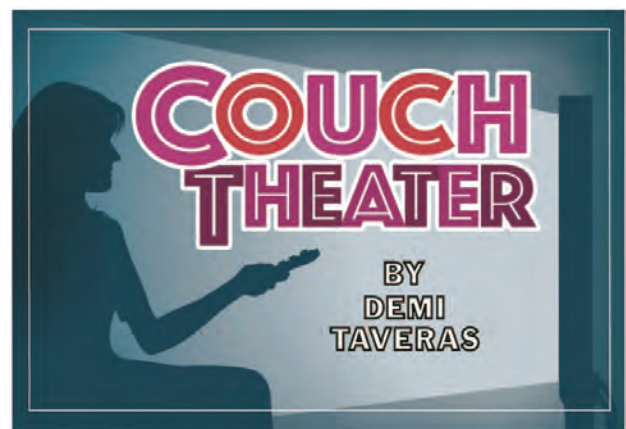
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Dove Cameron, left and Avan Jogia star in "56 Days."

"56 Days."

"56 Days" (TV-MA) — Between the thrills and the steaminess that this new series brings, binge-watchers might not be able to resist it! An adaptation of Catherine Ryan Howard's 2021 novel of the same name, "56 Days" stars two actors who got their start on Disney and Nickelodeon, respectively — Dove Cameron ("Liv and Maddie") and Avan Jogia ("Victorious"). The steamy duo play couple Oliver and Ciara, who commenced their passionate love affair after a chance meeting at a supermarket. (What a dream!) Fifty-six days after the chance meeting, a body is found in Oliver's apartment, which leads detectives to probe deeper into Oliver's life and his relationship with Ciara. All eight episodes premiere on Feb. 18. (Amazon Prime Video)

"The 'Burbs" (TV-MA) — You might remember a 1989 film called "The 'Burbs" starring Tom Hanks, Bruce Dern and Carrie Fisher. Well, this new television series is a reimagining of that very film, with Keke Palmer ("Nope") and Jack Whitehall ("Malice") as the main stars. Palmer plays Samira, who takes a chance on moving to a quiet cul-de-sac that used to be her husband Rob's (Whitehall) childhood neighborhood. As the couple settles into suburban life, Samira notices oddities surrounding an old home, which lead her to think that it's haunted. With the help of bored neighbors who have nothing else to do, Samira decides to probe deeper into the old house, but she might not like where the road takes her. All eight episodes are out now to stream. (Peacock)

ris Dickinson ("Baby-girl"), who will be playing John Lennon in the 2028 biopic film about the Beatles, decided to make his directorial debut before donning Lennon's signature glasses. This drama film premiered at the most recent Cannes Film Festival and stars Frank Dillane ("Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince") as a homeless young man named Mike. Struggling with addiction and poverty, Mike attempts to get off the streets and find a reliable way to make a living. But with life continuing to put obstacles in the road, the immense pressure that Mike feels is enough to make even an urchin like him lose his mind. Premieres Feb. 17. (Hulu)

"Can You Keep a Secret?" (TV-14) — This sitcom features a handful of movie and television stars from across the pond, including Dawn French ("French and Saunders"), Mark Heap ("Piglets"), and Craig Roberts ("22 Jump Street"). Loosely based on the real-life disappearance of John Darwin, the six-episode series follows retired couple Debbie (French) and William (Heap), who capitalize on an opportunity to claim life insurance after William is mistakenly pronounced dead. Although their son, Harry (Roberts), tries to persuade them to give the money back because this is, indeed, a criminal activity, he somehow gets sucked into the charade as well. The first episode is out now, with subsequent episodes premiering every Thursday. (Paramount+)



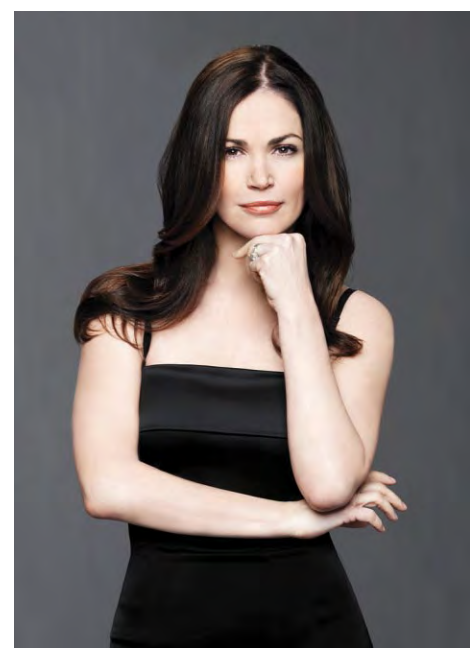
Q:I saw a news story about Kim Delaney's personal life recently. I remember watching her on "All My Children" as Jenny when I was younger. Is she doing OK? Is she still acting? — W.E.

A:The love story between Jenny and Greg is probably only second to Luke and Laura's in ABC daytime soap history. Kim Delaney earned a Daytime Emmy Award nomination for the role of Jenny Gardner on "All My Children" — her first major role. Her time on "AMC" was brief for soap standards, only three years (1981-1984), before she pivoted her career to feature films. While she never became a movie star, her career did take off once again when she was cast as Detective Diane Russell in the hit series "NYPD Blue." It was only supposed to be for four episodes, but fans (likely many who knew her from her soap opera days) responded well to her performance opposite Jimmy Smits' Detective Bobby Simone. She was then offered a contract and even won an Emmy in 1997 for the role.

In 2007, she landed another hit show — a soapy drama series on Lifetime called "Army Wives," where she played Claudia until 2012. In 2020, "General Hospital" lured her back to daytime television with an offer to play Jackie Templeton, a popular character whom Port Charles hadn't seen since Demi Moore departed from the role in 1984. Delaney left "GH" in 2021, and her last on-camera role was a recurring one on NBC's "Chicago Fire." She has no upcoming projects listed on her IMDb page at this time.

Q:When is the next chapter of "American Horror Story" coming out, and what is it about? — J.K.

A:The 13th season of Ryan Murphy's anthology series "American Horror Story" will premiere on FX on Halloween later this year. The story is said to be related in some way to prior season three's "Coven" and season eight's "Apocalypse" stories. It will usher in the return of Murphy's muse, Sarah Paulson, and other favorites like Even Pe-



Kim Delaney as Claudia Joy Holden in "Army Wives"

ters, Jessica Lange and Emma Roberts. Pop superstar/actress Ariana Grande ("Wicked") is also said to be joining the cast. Filming is said to begin this month or in March.

Q: I remember seeing the Tom Hanks movie "The 'Burbs" in theaters back in the day and want to check out the new TV series of the same name. Is that Julia Duffy I see on the commercials? I loved her on "Newhart"! — J.J.

A:Yes, that's the hilarious comedic actress Julia Duffy occupying the neighborhood in the new Peacock series "The 'Burbs," which is said to be loosely based on the 1989 movie of the same name. The series stars Keke Palmer ("Nope") and Jack Whitehall ("Bad Education") as a young couple who move back into the husband's childhood home, which is surrounded by creepy — and nosy — neighbors. The eight-episode first season of "The 'Burbs" is currently available to binge on Peacock.

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU puzzle grid and instructions

HOCUS-FOCUS puzzle with two panels and instructions

February 16, 2026 Posting Date King Crossword

King Crossword puzzle grid and word list

Trivia Test Answers: 1. A hand, and each banana is a finger...

Trivia test questions and answers

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Judge Lina Hidalgo and Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia Deliver Meals on Wheels to Homebound Seniors



Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo and U.S. Representative Sylvia Garcia delivered meals to homebound seniors on Friday through Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston & Galveston County's Meals on Wheels program.

"What better way to show love to the community ahead of Valentine's Day than by delivering meals to folks in need. With inflation, food insecurity and costs of living still high, the work that Meals on Wheels does is important now more than ever. We're all working together to help our community deal with rising costs, and it was a really special experience for Congresswoman Garcia and I to help support Meals on Wheels today," said **Judge Lina Hidalgo**.

According to a 2025 report from the Kinder Institute, more than 2

in 5 households in Harris County are food insecure, which is nearly three times the national average. Last year, Meals on Wheels delivered 1,385,654 meals to over 6,000 seniors in Harris County. They also distributed 80,724 pounds of pet food through their Animeals program.

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Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo is Harris County's chief executive and Director of the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Judge Hidalgo, alongside four county precinct commissioners, oversees a budget of approximately \$5 billion that funds services and institutions for the third-largest county in the nation, home to nearly 5 million people. For more information about Harris County and the Office of the County Judge, please visit: cjo.harriscountytexas.gov.

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EVERY THIRD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
CADA TERCER MIÉRCOLES DEL MES

On We-Cycle Wednesdays, the center will accept **ALL EAST ALDINE RESIDENTS** without an appointment. You will need to bring a photo ID, as well as a water, light, or gas bill, as **proof of residency**.

Los miércoles de reciclaje WE-Cycle, el centro de reciclaje atenderá a **TODOS LOS RESIDENTES DE EAST ALDINE** sin cita previa. Deberá presentar una identificación con fotografía, así como una factura de agua, luz o gas como **comprobante de domicilio**.

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