

NORTH CHANNEL

★ STAR

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CHANNEL CHATTER



Joe Stephens Golf Tournament

Annual Golf Tournament, Thursday, April 13, 2017, 12:00 pm at River Terrace Golf Course, 16777 Wallisville Rd., Houston, TX 77049. You may register online at www.VoteJoeStephens.com Catfish Dinner from 6 pm - 8 pm at Wallisville Rotary Pavilion, 14350 1/2 Wallisville Rd., Houston, TX 77049.

CHANNELVIEW ISD Band Boosters planning classic car show

The Channelview ISD Band Boosters will host their second annual Classic Car Show from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, March 11 at the Ray Maddy Memorial Stadium complex.

Participants who would like to show their vehicles at the "Car Show In The View" may register up until the day of the event. Pre-Registration is \$95 and registration on the day of the event is \$30. To register, contact Rick Allison by e-mail at rick.allison01@yahoo.com. Goodie Bags, dash plaques and free shirts are only for pre-registered entries.

The public is invited to this event and door prizes will be given away during the event. If heavy rains occur, the event will be rescheduled to March 25.

For additional information, please call 915-241-6546.

Galena Park Council meeting returns to calm

Interim Police Chief lays the Law Down to Citizens

By Allan Jamail

Galena Park, TX. March 7, 2017@ 6 PM: In a remarkable difference from the heated council meeting two weeks before Mayor Moya and the Commissioners calmly took care of the city's business on the agenda without any disruptions largely due to the stricter meeting rules the mayor had Interim Police Chief Reese Martin explain to the citizens prior to calling the meeting to order.

Mayor Moya kept a tight rein on the agenda making sure all business was taken care of in an orderly manner. The mayor even translated in Spanish some of the most important issues on the agenda so those not familiar with English could be well informed.

After the mayor gave an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag the



Photo by Allan Jamail

KEEPING ORDER: After Interim Police Chief Reese Martin presented some newly created Meeting Rules which state that if a citizen disrupts the lawful meeting of the city they'll be escorted from the building and arrested for violating Texas Penal Code 42.05.

Former Commissioner Maricela Serna (standing) tells Chief Martin after he presented the new Meeting Rules that in times past when citizens were speaking out of order and she called for Mayor Moya to bring order, the mayor said this is the "people's meeting" and the mayor then didn't care if citizens spoke out, Serna seemed confused why now Moya wants to silence the citizens.

Chief Martin said he believes an arrest is the last resort but he feels now it has gotten to this point and he encouraged citizens to speak but to do so after the business of the city has been completed. He said he believes in the First Amendment Right of Freedom of Speech but no person can use this to disrupt a lawful meeting. Furthermore he said from this point forward city council meetings will be done so in an orderly manner.



Photo by Allan Jamail

ANGERED FORMER COMMISSIONER: At the most recent council meeting of March 7, 2017 Former Commissioner Robert Clowers (hands raised) tells Mayor Moya she had no legal authority to ask Chief Mata neither to resign nor to pay him \$12,000 in severance pay if he'd resign without having first bringing the issue before the entire council for a collective decision. He ended by saying the city is being ran like Larry, Curly and Moe (The 3 Stooges).

council gave unanimous approval of the previous meeting's minutes. Commissioner Oscar Silva Jr. was absent.

The Financial Accounts Payable report through

March 7, 2017 was approved with Commissioner Eric Broussard voting no.

A representative of Belt-Harris Pechacek LLP pre-

See Council Meeting, Page 6

Galena Park Mayor replaces Police Chief

Mata bringing controversy to city

By Allan Jamail

Galena Park, Texas: In an interview with North Channel Star writer Allan Jamail the former Galena Park Police Chief Edward Mata said that on February 28, 2017 he met with Mayor Esmeralda Moya and Water & Sewer Commissioner Rodney Chersky where the mayor told him to resign or he'd be fired for insubordination.

Mata said Mayor Moya told him she felt he was insubordinate when he refused her instructions to remove a former Commis-

sioner Maricela Serna at the February 21st council meeting where Serna and some citizens were speaking out of order. Mata said, "I told the mayor I disagreed with her, I was not insubordinate, I told her she herself failed to follow the Meeting Rules for keeping order in the meetings by her not having first given Serna a warning." Mata said he reads the Meeting Rules almost before every council meeting. Furthermore Mata said, "The mayor positively did not instruct me to remove Serna or anyone else spe-



Former Chief Edward Mata



Interim Chief Reese Martin

cifically, when I heard citizens speaking out of order I then noticed the mayor raising her hand and pointing towards a group of citizens in attendance and she said Mata."

The former chief said he

thinks he handled the situation correctly. "I ordered those speaking out of order to stop or they'd be removed, and because of my warning the meeting became orderly." Mata continued to say in his de-

fense had he arrested someone without a violation of the Meeting Rules or any law violation then both he and the city could have been sued. He went on to say, "the official minutes of the meeting will support my claim of the mayor never instructing me to remove anyone."

Mata said in the meeting with Mayor Moya and Water & Sewer Commissioner Chersky he told the mayor he wanted to call his attorney for advice before

See Police Chief Replaced, P. 6

HISTORY AND TRADITION

From trail rides to bull riding, its RODEO time

On the first day of the 2017 Houston Rodeo, it was fitting that Highlands Rotary had a speaker from that organization. Gary McHenry, who is head of the Rodeo speakers bureau, reviewed the history of the Houston Rodeo, told a few funny stories, and asked Rotarians to participate in the events.

In fact, four members of the Highlands Rotary indicated they were doing volunteer work for this year's Rodeo, much to McHenry's appreciation.

McHenry had previously been at the North Shore Rotary luncheon, demonstrating how bull riding is performed and judged.

McHenry is not only an accomplished speaker, and head of the Speaker's committee, but he is also a trail rider, as part of the Salt Grass Trail Ride. This is the oldest of the 13 trail rides, having started in 1952 by four men that rode from Brenham to Houston. This year they started from Cat Spring, and rode 103 miles over six days. There were 1200 riders,



HLS&R committee chairman Gary McHenry entertained and informed Rotary Clubs in Highlands and North Shore.

and 24 wagons, a huge contingent.

McHenry is also part of the opening ceremony each night, riding into the NRG stadium in the Grand Entry. His wife participates too, on the popular Mutton-Bustin committee for

young children trying to ride a small sheep.

McHenry reminded the Rotarians that the Rodeo was originally started for the purpose of advancing agriculture, and that is still its main goal. See more RODEO, page 2

NEW BUSINESS IN EAST HARRIS COUNTY

New ShowBiz Cinema opens, first in 20 years



North Channel Chamber of Commerce welcomed Showbiz Cinemas as a new member at a ribbon cutting on Thursday, March 2nd. Location is on Beltway 8 at Highway 90.

The brand-new facility marks the first theater to open in East Harris County for 20 years, and represents ShowBiz's third location in Houston to date. The new theater will feature 11 auditoriums with cutting edge digital projection, floor-to-ceiling/wall-to-wall screens, state-of-the-art sound systems, party rooms, a lavish full bar, and an arcade center with redeemable prizes, as well as an SDX auditorium. SDX is ShowBiz Cinemas' exclusive premium large format label, which offers movie-goers the Superior Digital experience. Each SDX auditorium features a massive 70ft screen, 4K DLP digital projection, immersive Dolby Atmos surround sound, and oversized custom made leather chairs.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Rodeo Trail Rides



Salt Grass Trail Ride, the oldest and original ride.



Salt Grass Trail Ride arrives in Houston.



Spanish Trail Ride beds down for Thursday night.



Trail Boss Joe Cantrell of Spanish Trail Riders



Trail Riders arrive at their destination in Houston, at Memorial Park.

Judge Joe Stephens Sets Date for Teen Court

Judge Joe Stephens sets the date for his first Teen Court on Tuesday, March 21, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. The newly elected justice of the peace is already recruiting student volunteers between the ages of 13-18 years old for his first teen court. Students interested in a career in the judicial system, community service projects or those who like to debate are all welcome to attend.

Parents, teenagers and various members of the Harris County Court System will meet in Judge Stephens' courtroom located in the courthouse at 14350 Wallisville Rd., Houston, TX 77049 for an overview of the program. Teenage members of the Criminal Justice Program at North Shore Senior High led by their instructor, Kenneth Fisher, will hold a mock trial for those in attendance. The students just recently com-

pleted a Teen Court Competition and are moving on to the State Finals.

Judge Stephens' stated, "My goal is to introduce the kids to the court as a potential career opportunity and not just the place you go when you're in trouble. I want participants to come away with a positive feeling about Teen Court. The teen attorneys" have learned something about the law and court system and get a chance to be active players in a very important role. The defendants may be thankful for their chance to resolve the matter through Teen Court vs. the Juvenile Court System. Defendants also get the opportunity to be judged by their peers and not by an adult who may not understand things the way juveniles understand each other. Ideally, these students will think twice about making decisions that could affect their

lives negatively."

The trial set for March 21st will be a mock trial put on by teenage volunteers. Once the students are trained and ready, they will have the opportunity to hear real cases in Judge Stephens' Court. Teen Court is the sentencing phase only of a case and jurors will be given a list of sanctions by the type of offense committed. Sanctions can range from 8-30 hours of community service, serve as a juror on teen court, essays or a letter of apology. The case is dismissed and no further action is taken provided the defendant successfully completes the sanctions ordered in the program.

Students interested in being a part of Judge Stephens' Teen Court Program can contact the court by email at MYJP31@JP.HCTX.NET. Parents are welcome to attend.

Rodeo Time, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The public also associates it with a large scholarship program, top western entertainers, and a full slate of rodeo competition events.

The Rodeo is in its 85th year, and its mission is to Preserve, Protect, and Research Agriculture. There are 33,000 volunteers every year to help run the show for its 20 days.

The entertainment started Tuesday night, March 7 with Aaron Watson as the performer, and will end on Sunday, March 26 with the Zac Brown Band. During the 20 days, it will feature such stars as Alicia Keys, Alan Jackson, Willie Nelson, ZZ Top, and many others.

The scholarship program currently has 2400 students enrolled in various colleges. This year they received \$26 million in scholarships.

Another popular event is the Calf Scramble, where 30 kids try to catch and rope 15 calves. Those that succeed get a \$2000 scholarship as a reward.

Over the years since its inception, the Rodeo has awarded \$430 million in scholarships. Each student today received \$18,000 yearly for their 4 years in college, which must be a Texas institution.

The students participation in the Rodeo is huge, with art students numbering as many as 200,000 each year. There is also a category for Ag Mechanics, with a large show of work at the NRG Center during the show time.

During the length of the show, 2.5 million people will visit the NRG park, and 1.5 million of those will attend a show.

Rodeo events will award \$2 million in prize money. The top Bull Rider, winning for 5 nights, will receive \$50,000.

A BBQ cook-off, and a Carnival are two other top attractions.

★ COMMUNITY CALENDAR

David H. McNerney JROTC Building Dedication

The Crosby JROTC Department will conduct the David H. McNerney JROTC Building dedication ceremony on 21 March 2017 at 0930 at Crosby High School. 1SG David McNerney is Crosby's own Medal of honor recipient and the new JROTC facility was named in his honor. Approximately 25 members and their spouses of Company A, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry 4th Infantry Division will attend and be a part of the ceremony. All CUSD board members, members of the local American Legion post, the VFW, the Eastside Veterans organization, and the general public are invited to attend.

Crosby Education Foundation events

- March 25, 2017 Crosby Education Foundation hosts its first annual "Kids on A Big Rig". Families are invited to come and enjoy an up close look at a variety of farm equipment, emergency vehicles, heavy equipment, antique cars and trucks. Petting zoo, face painting, inflatable, concessions. \$5 per person, max \$20 family.
- March 31, 2017 Crosby Education Foundation hosts its 6th annual Golf Tournament. Stonebridge at Newport, more information contact CEF at 281-328-9200 ext. 1249. Registration is now open.

Crosby Community Center events

- Aerobics With Melissa:** Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. Boost your energy, stamina, and flexibility with certified aerobics instructor Melissa Turner.
 - Sit and Sew:** Mondays at 9 a.m. Take this opportunity to quilt, share ideas, and enjoy the fellowship of other quilters. Create donation quilts for local needs.
 - Dominoes:** Mondays at 1 p.m. and Fridays at 9 a.m. Enjoy a friendly game of dominoes and meet players with similar interests.
 - TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) Meetings:** Mondays at 5:30 p.m. TOPS provides weekly educational and nutritional facts necessary to control weight.
 - Kickboxing with Angelique:** Mondays at 6 p.m. Exercise with experienced fitness instructor Angelique Pool to achieve a toned body.
- Crosby Community Center is a Precinct 2 Community Center located at 409 Hare Road, Crosby 77532. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information regarding classes or other Center programs, please call (281) 462-0543.



Claudia Leblanc Jenny Hinson Donna Haynes Jodie Roane Jack Noonan Kathy Laramore

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COMMUNITY/SCHOOL NEWS

Galena Park ISD students come together for the Multimedia Festival

Galena Park ISD's Technology Department hosted its 15th Annual Multimedia Festival on Thursday, March 5th. Approximately 450 students from grades K-12th celebrated their hard work and accomplishments by showing off technology projects.

During the festival, students were able to interact with the coding projects and robots, which were demonstrated by Team Robotics from Galena Park High School. Medals were handed to students for their excellent performance in the following multimedia project categories: coding, graphic design, choice challenge and 3D digital modeling. This year's contest medals were designed by Samantha Chimene, a student at Cunningham Middle School.

The Multimedia Festival is a team effort and would not be successful without the help and support of GPISD parents, teachers, administrators, cabinet members, board members, North Shore Senior High, Galena Park High School and the GPISD technology team.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

East Houston Democrats meeting

East Houston Democrats March Membership Meeting, Thursday, March 9, 6:30 p.m. Membership Meetings are held at Fuddrucker's located at 855 Normandy Road. This month, the club will have three newly elected Judges, The Honorable Judge Fredericka Phillips of the 61st District Court, The Honorable Judge Robert Johnson of the 177th District Court and The Honorable Judge Ramona Franklin of the 338th District Court. For more information, please contact Charlotte Jackson, Treasurer at 832-896-1633 or by email at Charlotte.Jackson@yahoo.com.

The Buckshot Jamboree

Enjoy Classic Country music every Saturday night from 7 pm - 10 pm with The Buckshot Jamboree at 7414 Hartman near Old Beaumont Highway. More info, call 281-458-0729 or 832-444-5000.

Galena Park Senior Dance

Senior Dance is every Monday at the Alvin D. Building, 1302 Keene St., Galena Park. 7 pm - 9 pm. No cover charge. Live band Country music. Call for more information: 713-455-7335.

North Shore Senior Dance

North Shore Seniors holds a dance every Thursday from 1 - 4 pm at the Grayson/Baldree Building, Corpus Christi street. Live bands and refreshments. Cost is \$ 5/per person. For more information call 713-455-3660.

San Jacinto Pilot Club meeting

The Club meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at Lyondell-Basell on Sheldon Road at noon. For more information, please visit www.SanJacintoPilot.com.

Safety meeting

The monthly safety meeting has changed to Monday, March 13, 2017 at 8:30 am at the East Freeway HPD Storefront, 12001-A East Freeway, Houston, Texas.

North Channel Library events

-Saturday, March 11, 11 am, Ask-A-Lawyer.
-Monday, March 13, 2:30 pm, Monday Movie Madness: The BFG
-Tuesday, March 14, 10:30 am, Toddler Time; 1:30 pm, Polliwog Club: Animal Arguments.
-Wednesday, March 15, 2:30 pm, Aladdin by Marionette Playhouse.
-Thursday, March 16, 10:30 am, Baby time; 12:00 pm, AARP Tax Help.
-Saturday, March 18, 2:00 pm, Faithful Paws.
Library located at 15741 Wallisville Rd., 77049. 281-457-1631.

Sheldon ISD Board recognizes Educators of the Month for February

Members of the Sheldon ISD school board recognized the district's Educators of the Month for February at the Feb. 21 school board meeting in the Ney Administration Building Board Room.

Pictured (from left) are Fred Rivas, School Board President; Mellanies Shaw, Null Middle School; Yolimar Mears, Carroll Elementary; Chaunte Finney, King High School; Perla Reyna, Sheldon Elementary; Kriston Boyd, Garrett Elementary; San Juana Salinas de Vizcacha; Vicky Clements, Monahan Elementary; Tonia Gas-ton, Royalwood Elementary; Tammy Baty-Rice, King Middle School; King Davis, Sheldon ISD Superintendent; and Alice Stein, Early College High School. Not pictured is Martha Garza, Cravens Early Childhood Academy.



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OPINION PAGE

Huberty Files School Finance Reform Bill

AUSTIN – Texas House Public Education Committee Chairman Dan Huberty on Monday filed House Bill 21, which provides \$1.6 billion in additional resources for education while making several improvements to the state's school finance formulas.

When compared to what they are scheduled to receive under current law, more than 95 percent of Texas school districts receive additional per-student funding under House Bill 21. In addition, almost every charter school gets additional dollars. Funding for House Bill 21 is included in House Bill 1, the House's proposed state budget for the next two years.

"We are putting more resources in the classroom and making needed reforms to our school finance formulas," Chairman Huberty said. "By increasing state funding for schools, we can improve instruction and reduce the need for higher property taxes. This bill would keep more local tax dollars in local public schools."

House Bill 21:

- Reduces the amount of money that local taxpayers would pay in Recapture by \$163 million in 2018 and \$192 million in 2019.
- Increases the Basic Allotment from \$5,140 to \$5,350.
- Creates new transportation funding at \$125 per student funded through the Basic Allotment, which will benefit charters and allow

districts that pay Recapture to fully access state transportation funding for the first time.

- Provides weighted funding for students with dyslexia.
- Provides a two-year hardship grant program to help districts affected by the expiration of Additional State Aid for Tax Reduction.

"This plan helps students across the board, including those who attend charter schools," Chairman Huberty said. "We are beginning to fix flaws in our school finance system and helping schools meet the increasingly high demands that have been put on them."

Last year, the Texas Supreme Court ruled that the state's school finance system was constitutional but deeply flawed. Following that ruling, House Speaker Joe Straus encouraged legislators to continue working on school finance reforms.

"Our school finance system needs a lot of work, and Chairman Huberty's bill is a very good start," Speaker Straus said. "We have the time and the resources to improve public education this year, and I want to thank Chairman Huberty for presenting a strong and bipartisan plan to address this priority."

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MESSAGE FROM
REP. BRIAN BABIN

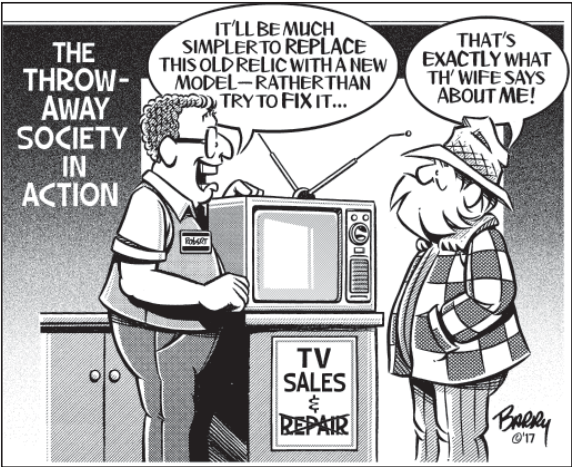


Babin applauds ExxonMobil's \$20 billion investment in U.S. Gulf Region

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. Brian Babin (R-TX), a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, applauded ExxonMobil's announcement today that it is expanding its manufacturing capacity along the U.S. Gulf Coast through a \$20 billion investment over a 10-year period, including investments in Baytown, Texas. According to ExxonMobil, the new projects are expected to create more than 45,000 high-paying American jobs across the region and thousands more through the multiplier effect.

"This is more good news for our community, Texas and the United States," said Rep. Babin. "The decision by ExxonMobil to

invest another \$20 billion here in the United States demonstrates their commitment to the American people and the American worker. It will create tens of thousands of jobs, following on the billions of dollars invested in our region over just the past few years. Congress and the Trump Administration have been working overtime to create a jobs-friendly environment that says to companies—who could go anywhere else in the world—that America is open for business and we want you to invest and create jobs here at home. Today's announcement is another positive step in that direction."



House, Senate approve bills to protect children in foster system

AUSTIN — Both houses of the Texas Legislature last week passed bills to improve the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in response to Gov. Greg Abbott's call for emergency action to improve child protection programs.

Tasked with protecting children, elders and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect and exploitation, the DFPS, part of the Texas Health and Human Commission, has attracted attention in recent years for inadequate funding and staffing to meet obligations.

Senate Bill 11, whose primary author is Charles Schwertner, R-Georgetown, was approved by the Senate on March 1. The bill would shift to private contractors the DFPS's foster care management mission, but the state would remain the ultimate guardian over foster children. Schwertner said. The bill also contains oversight and accountability provisions to enable close monitoring by the DFPS and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

Meanwhile, on March 2, the Texas House approved HB 4 by Cindy Burkett, R-Sunnyvale, to provide additional support for family members who care for a child who has been removed from his or her home. Also approved was HB 5 by James Frank, R-Wichita Falls, to give the DFPS more autonomy by making it a separate agency with its own commissioner.

In passing HB 4 and HB 5, the House has taken "important steps toward providing better protection and care for children in terrible circumstances," Speaker Joe Straus said.

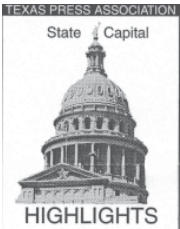
Senate OKs 'con-con' bills

The Texas Senate on Feb. 28 approved Senate Joint Resolution 2, an application to the U.S. Congress to call a convention of the states, and SB 21, rules for selecting and controlling delegates to that convention. Joint resolutions must be approved by both chambers of the Legislature, but do not require

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STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Ed Sterling



approval by the governor.

Primary author Sen. Brian Birdwell, R-Granbury, said eight other states have passed resolutions similar to SJR 2.

"It is abundantly clear to me," Birdwell said, "that the Congress is incapable of or unwilling to propose amendments that limit its own power or that of the other branches to return our nation to the original spirit of federalism intended by our founders. The mechanism for that is found in Article V of the U.S. Constitution, which requires Congress to call a convention for the purpose of amending the nation's founding document if 34 states formally petition for it. Any amendments approved at that convention are adopted if 38 states ratify it."

Perry joins Trump cabinet

The U.S. Senate on March 2 confirmed Rick Perry as secretary of the Department of Energy.

"America has been blessed with vast natural resources and the technology to utilize them," Perry told his new employees the next day. "I am committed to helping provide stable, reliable, affordable and secure sources of American energy. An America-first energy strategy is important to create jobs and grow the economy."

Perry also took a moment to poke fun at himself for not remembering, during a presidential de-

bate in late 2011, the name of the Department of Energy in a list of federal agencies he said he would eliminate if he were elected president. In his March 3 remarks, Perry expressed his appreciation of the department's work and pledged to be a strong advocate for it.

Perry served as governor of Texas from December 2000 to January 2015.

Sales tax revenue grows

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar on March 2 announced state sales tax revenue totaled \$2.4 billion in February, 4.4 percent more than in February 2016.

"While tax collections from oil and gas mining remain subdued, receipts from telecommunications, construction, services and retail and wholesale trade increased significantly," Hegar said.

Sales tax revenue is the largest source of state funding for the state budget, accounting for 58 percent of all tax collections in fiscal 2016. Total sales tax revenue for the three months ending in February 2017 was up by 2.8 percent compared with the same period a year ago, Hegar added.

DSHS gives Zika update

The Texas Department of State Health Services on Feb. 28 announced that as of Feb. 24, six Zika virus cases have been confirmed in Texas for calendar year 2017.

DSHS posts updates at TexasZika.org every Tuesday on the number of Zika

State Sales Tax Revenue totaled \$2.4 Billion in February

(AUSTIN) — Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar said today that state sales tax revenue totaled \$2.4 billion in February, 4.4 percent more than in February 2016.

"Growth in sales tax revenue was due to increased collections from most sectors of the economy," Hegar said. "While tax collections from oil- and gas-mining remain subdued, receipts from telecommunications, construction, services and retail and wholesale trade increased significantly."

Total sales tax revenue for the three months ending in February 2017 was up by 2.8 percent compared with the same period a year ago. Sales tax revenue is the largest source of state funding for the state budget, accounting for 58 percent of all tax collections in fiscal 2016. Motor vehicle sales and rental taxes, motor fuel taxes and oil and natural gas production taxes are also large revenue sources for the state.

In February 2017, Texas collected the following revenue from those taxes:

- motor vehicle sales and rental taxes — \$373.2 million, up 0.3 percent from February 2016;
- motor fuel taxes — \$289.7 million, up 1.1 percent from February 2016; and
- oil and natural gas production taxes — \$277.7 million, up 150 percent from February 2016. The increase is, in part, due to refunds that went to natural gas severance taxpayers in February 2016, which resulted in artificially low tax collections during that period.

virus disease cases in Texas as by the patient's county of residence.

Cases confirmed this year, by county, are: Bexar, 1 case; Brazoria, 1; Cameron, 2; Lubbock, 1; and Smith, 1. Statewide, some 310 cases were confirmed in calendar years 2015 and 2016.

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LIFESTYLE

Chevron Phillips Chemical Co. Presents E-Week at Gentry

By Susan Passmore

Promoting interest in careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), engineers from Chevron Phillips Chemical Co. recently worked with 7th-grade science classes at Gentry Junior School during Engineering Week (E-Week).

The group from Chevron Phillips Chemical discussed the different types of engineers that work in design, production and maintenance in laboratories, industrial plants, offices and around the world. They described the products the Cedar Bayou plant in Baytown manufactures, such as ethylene, polyethylene, propylene, alpha olefins, and what they are used to produce. The junior scientists found out that many of the unfamiliar-sounding products are used to make items they use every day.

Small groups of students competed against each other to build marshmallow towers using only marshmallows and toothpicks. The goal was to build the highest tower with the least number of marshmallows, figuring out the ratio of height to number of marshmallows. Using teamwork and problem-solving skills, the groups created their towers during the timed exercise, measuring them with a ruler.

"They are using teamwork, and that's important. I also think that this helps them to plan for the



Photo by Carrie Pryor-Newman

(from left) Jasmine Huarachi, Esperanza Torres and Megan Ondap use teamwork to figure out a plan for their marshmallow tower during an E-Week activity with engineers from Chevron Phillips Chemical Co.

future now that they're really thinking about careers. They are saying, "Wait, I want to be an engineer – maybe I do need to start planning," said Diana Sosa, 7th-grade science teacher.

The educational partnership benefits the Chevron Phillips employees as well as the students.

Danielle Gore, a chemical engineer who hired on full time in June 2016 after participating in an internship at Chevron Phillips Chemical, enjoys going into the schools to work with students.

"I want to be a teacher. I teach on weekends and whenever I can. It makes you step back and look at everything from a different perspective," Gore said.

Engineers Week is an annual event, and this is the fourth year Chevron Phillips Chemical has taken the event to Gentry Junior School. The purpose

of Engineers Week, founded by the DiscoverE (formerly the National Engineers Week Foundation), is to celebrate how engineers make a difference in the world, increase public dialogue about the need for engineers, and to bring engineering to life for kids, educators, and parents.

"We hope by bringing our young, just-out-of-college engineers to middle schools we can inspire students to see themselves as future engineers," said Heather Betancourth, community relations representative for Chevron Phillips Chemical in Baytown. "Many of the professionals who work at our company experienced some moment or were inspired by some person to be who they are today. If one of our engineers can do that for just one student, then E-Week was successful."



1. Is the book of Ezekiel in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. Who/what does "their eyes stand out with fatness" refer to in Psalms 73? Demons, Wicked rich, Serpents, Unholy
3. From 1 Kings 17, what was the widow's cruse miraculously kept full of? Milk, Water, Oil, Light
4. Who reaped a crop a hundred times the grain he sowed? Gideon, Isaac, Samson, Hanun
5. Whose daughter was referred to as Talitha by Jesus? Zeresh, Jairus, Jeremiah, Shelomith
6. From Acts 16, who sold purple cloth? Lydia, Zimri, Sisera, Hannah

ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) Wicked rich; 3) Oil; 4) Isaac; 5) Jairus; 6) Lydia

GCCISD District Spelling Bee Winners awarded



Photo by Carrie Pryor-Newman

Winners of the Goose Creek CISD District Spelling Bee show off their trophies following the recent competition held at Cedar Bayou Junior School. Pictured are (from left) Genevieve Diaz, 8th-grader from Baytown Junior School, 3rd place; Anushka Ranjan, 7th-grader from Highlands Junior School, 1st place and Madeleine Broussard, 7th-grader from Gentry Junior School, 2nd place.

Happy 105th Birthday

Helen Hanggee of Crosby, formerly of Cherokee Village, Arkansas, will celebrate her 105th birthday on March 14. She is a member of the Crosby Lions Club and attends Crosby United Methodist Church



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1 Corinthians 16:13

Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God.
Leviticus 19:32

ASK THE EXPERT

ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: "What is Alexandrite and where is it found?"

Often described by gem aficionados as "emerald by day, ruby by night," Alexandrite is the very rare color-change variety of the mineral chrysoberyl. Originally discovered in Russia's Ural Mountains in the 1830s, it's now found in Sri Lanka, East Africa, and Brazil, but fine material is exceptionally rare and valuable.

Alexandrite, with its chameleon-like qualities, is a rare variety of the mineral chrysoberyl. Its color can be a lovely green in daylight or fluorescent light, changing to brownish or purplish red in the incandescent light from a lamp or candle flame. This is a result of the complex way the mineral absorbs light.

Alexandrite's dramatic color change is sometimes described as "emerald by day, ruby by night." Other gems also change color in response to a light-source change, but this gem's transformation is so striking that the phenomenon itself is often called "the alexandrite effect."

Alexandrite is also a strongly pleochroic gem, which means it can show different colors when viewed from different directions. Typically, its three pleochroic colors are green, orange, and purple-red. However, the striking color change doesn't arise from the gem's pleochroism, but rather from the mineral's unusual light-absorbing properties.

Because of its scarcity, especially in larger sizes, alexandrite is a relatively expensive member of the chrysoberyl family. It shares its status as a June birthstone with cultured pearl and moonstone.



This 7.19-carat alexandrite was cut to feature its beautiful color change. When the light source changes from daylight to incandescent light, the gem's color changes from bluish green to reddish purple.

Brief History
Abundant alexandrite deposits were first discovered in 1830 in Russia's Ural Mountains. Those first Alexandrite were of very fine quality and displayed vivid hues and dramatic color change. The gem was named after the young Alexander II, heir apparent to the throne. It caught the country's attention because its red and green colors mirrored the national military colors of imperial Russia.

The spectacular Ural Mountain deposits didn't last forever, and now most alexandrite comes from Sri Lanka, East Africa, and Brazil. The newer deposits contain some fine-quality stones, but many display less-precise color change and muddier hues than the nineteenth-century Russian Alexandrite. You'll still find estate jewelry set with some of the famed Ural Mountain Alexandrite. They remain the quality standard for this phenomenal gemstone.

Diamond Jim is a diamond dealer and precious metals broker of NTR Metals. See more at: www.pineforestjewelry.com.

If you have questions pertaining to jewelry, watches, diamonds, precious stones, precious metals, and other questions related to the jewelry industry, email jmills@pineforestjewelry.com.

County Attorney Vince Ryan files suit to stop polluting Pasadena refinery

Harris County Attorney Vince Ryan filed an enforcement action in state District Court Friday against Pasadena Refining Services Inc. (PRSI) seeking to hold that company responsible for repeated violations of Texas environmental protection laws.

Investigations conducted by Harris County Pollution Control Services uncovered serious violations of the Texas Clean Air Act and Texas Clean Water Act. The County is asking

a court to review the company's environmental practices and if the company cannot develop an acceptable plan to achieve compliance, the County asks that a court-ordered receiver be appointed to insure the company takes the necessary corrective measures.

Violations included an incident that occurred on July 25, 2016 in which 1,446 pounds of sulfur dioxide was released during

a flaring operation. Sulfur dioxide is a toxic gas that has a characteristic smell. Human exposure to the gas can cause difficulty breathing and can be fatal. The release was almost five times the limit imposed by law. As a result of the release, the Washburn Tunnel and the Houston Ship Channel were closed, and the City of Galena Park issued a shelter-in-place order that lasted for one-and-a-half hours.

PRSI is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Petrobras, a Brazilian national oil company. The violations occurred at the century-old refinery the company operates on the Houston Ship Channel at 111 Red Bluff Road in Pasadena. The facility in question is one of oldest refineries in Texas.

County officials and company representatives met on March 2 and agreed to work together to resolve the case.

Police Chief Replaced,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

making a decision but the mayor told him he couldn't call his attorney, he only had two choices, resign or be fired for insubordination. Mata says Chersky wouldn't back him and sided with the mayor and told him to resign. Mata said, "Chersky said he doesn't know the Meeting Rules and I was very disappointed that a Water & Sewer Department Commissioner was present instead of the elected Police Commissioner"

Mata said the mayor told him if he'd resign she would give him two months' severance pay (\$12,000.00), so he agreed to resign. Mata said he wants to continue in law enforcement and didn't want a letter in his file for being fired even though he maintains his innocence.

Upon contacting Mayor Moya about Mata being replaced she said, "I don't know what all the issues are about... Mata decided

not to move to Galena Park and he had not found a residence here and he resigned. When he was hired it was explicitly a condition that he would move to Galena Park and he chose not to. It's as simple as that. We have a great interim chief in his place and everything is progressing smoothly."

Mayor Moya provided the North Channel Star with the Special Meeting minutes of June 25, 2016 which Chief Mata attended and was hired. The minutes state Mata was urged to move to and reside within the city in 6 months and make a good effort to move to the city within 6 months.

Mata when asked about the residency reason Mayor Moya gave the North Channel Star Mata said, "That's not the truth, the residency issue has never been brought up and especially in the meeting where I was asked to resign."

Mata said had the residency issue been raised as the mayor now claims, he would've been glad to have given her his immediate moving plans. "Residency was not the reason the mayor wanted me to resign" Mata repeated.

Fire & Police Commissioner Oscar Silva when contacted about the Chief's removal said he should have been present before Chief Mata was asked to resign. Silva said the mayor never invites him to meetings involving issues of the Fire & Police departments in which the citizens elected him to provide oversight of. Silva backed Mata's accounting of the meeting by saying the mayor never instructed Mata to remove Serna in which she says he was insubordinate. He said Chief Mata handled the situation in a professional way and did the right thing by first warning the citizens to not disrupt the meeting.

Silva when asked if he was going to run for mayor in the next election as rumored he said, "I might but if I don't we do need a change from the present mayor, Mayor Moya has good dictatorship skills and often gives ultimatums without choices as she conducts the business of the city like a dictator."

Interim Police Chief Reese Martin said to North Channel Star writer Allan Jamail he plans to apply for the fulltime Chief position once the city begins accepting applications. Chief Martin has been in law enforcement for nearly 19 years and has a Master's certification with The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement or TCOLE. Chief Martin is originally from DeRidder, Louisiana with a population of a little over 10,000, similar to Galena Park's.

Council Meeting,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sent the audit for fiscal year ending September 30, 2016 with unanimous approval by council.

The new waste collection agreement with Texas Waste Services was unanimously approved with a \$13.00 monthly fee

charged for the 3,400 residences. City Attorney Robert Collins said this will be a \$500,000 annual savings resulting in 2-1/2 million dollars saved over 5 years.

A lease agreement between the city and The Committee For A Better

Galena Park for a city building at 1703 3rd street was approved with Commissioner Eric Brossard voting no.

Council unanimously approved Leslie Bodak as a volunteer for the fire department and Santos Pena as part-time in ground maintenance. The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 PM.

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North Channel Chamber welcomes new member



Recently the North Channel Chamber of Commerce welcomed new member Fresenius Medical Care - Northeast Houston Dialysis with a ribbon cutting.



The North Channel Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for Garcia Law Offices (Accidentes De Autos) and welcomed them as new members.

Chamber topic: Workforce Development: Engaging Emerging Talent

Specialists in the development of young person's talents, to match them with desirable jobs in industry, presenting three views at the monthly luncheon of the North Channel Chamber last Friday.

Dr. Allatia Harris, of San Jacinto College, said that the Houston economy is driven by four industries: the Port of Houston, Space, Petrochemicals, and the Medical Center. All of these are looking for talent to join their work.

She said new industries, like natural gas, ask the question "Is workforce available?" before locating in a region. San Jac college has a program known as Mind Trekkers to engage your STEM students.

Denise Smesny presented information on "Dream It. Do It." This program means to make industrial work look attractive, and presents the types of skills needed, and their high rates of pay. In addition to the petrochemical field, these jobs can be found in transportation, construction, and welding.

Sarah "Sally K" Janes informed the audience of opportunities for women, referencing an annual Womens Conference held every year in February to highlight jobs, and apprenticeship and intern positions.



Allatia Harris Denise Smesny Sarah Janes

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PRESENTS

Spring Coloring & Painting Contest

The contest is open to children ages 5 – 18.

Categories are as follow:

- Category A: Ages 5 – 8 – Coloring
- Category B: Ages 9 – 12 – Coloring
- Category C: Ages 13 – 15 – Easter Egg Design
- Category D: Ages 16 – 18 – Painting Contest

Registration starts March 5th and ends March 30. Winners will be published on April 13, 2017.

Contestant may only submit one entry.

All entries must be done at THE ART HUB. Schedule will be given upon registration. Registration Fee: \$10 which includes use of materials: crayon, oil pastel or acrylic paint. Contestants may bring additional coloring materials of their choice.

Prizes:

1st Place Winner for each category will win: Summer Art Class (valued at \$195) plus other sponsored prizes.

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