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CHANNEL CURRENTS

MEMORIAL DAY May 25



COVID-19 Cases as of May 19, 2020

HOUSTON AREA 19 COUNTIES

15,049 POSITIVE
384 DEATHS
5,678 RECOVERED

TEXAS

50,133 POSITIVE
1,373 DEATHS
29,359 RECOVERED

UNITED STATES

1,527,895 POSITIVE
91,878 DEATHS
289,392 RECOVERED

WORLDWIDE

4,896,312 POSITIVE
323,221 DEATHS
1,688,564 RECOVERED

COVID-19 RESOURCES:

- City of Houston
Pre-Screening
832-393-4220
- Harris County Ask a Nurse
713-634-1110
- Harris County Pre-Screening 832-927-7575 or
readyharris.org
- Methodist Hospital
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Governor Abbott announces phase two to open Texas

AUSTIN - May 18, 2020 -- Governor Greg Abbott today announced the second phase of the State of Texas' ongoing plan to safely and strategically open Texas while minimizing the spread of COVID-19. Under Phase II, restaurants may increase their occupancy to 50% and additional services and activities that remained closed under Phase I may open with restricted occupancy levels

and minimum standard health protocols laid out by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

Additionally, the Governor announced that public schools in Texas have the option to provide in-person summer school so long as they follow social distancing practices and health protocols laid out by DSHS. These classes may begin as soon as June 1st.

"Today, tomorrow, and every day going forward is one step closer to medical discoveries that can treat and protect people from COVID-19—but until that day comes, our focus is keeping Texans safe while restoring their ability to get back to work, open their businesses, pay their bills, and put food on their tables," said Governor Abbott. "By continuing to use safe practices, we are slow-

ing the spread of COVID-19 and protecting our most vulnerable. Now more than ever, we need to work together as one Texas. I ask all Texans to continue heeding the guidance of our state and federal medical experts and do their part to protect public health. If we all unite in our resolve, we will overcome this challenge."

Via Executive Order, the following services and

activities may open under Phase II.

Child Care Centers (May 18)

Massage and Personal Care Centers (May 18)

Youth Clubs (May 18)

Rodeo and Equestrian Events (May 22)

Bowling Alleys, Bingo Halls, Simulcast Racing, and Skating Rinks (May 22)

See Texas Opens, Page 8

Alice Adams wins truck in North Shore Rotary raffle



Rotary Fish Fry chair Lowell Everitt pulls a winning raffle ticket, as president Ryan Dagley looks on. Saturday, the North Shore Rotary drew for 20 prizes at Turner Chevrolet live and on Facebook, for a 2020 Chevy Colorado or Camaro that was won by Alice Adams on a ticket sold by Wayne Oquin. A Lucky seller was B.R. Hendrix with 5 of the 20 pulled.

CROSBY -- Turner Chevrolet hosted the North Shore Rotary club as they held their drawing for prizes associated with their annual raffle. The normal Catfish Fry and Crawfish Boil was not held, due to the pandemic. This fundraiser is the

FULL LIST OF RAFFLE WINNERS SEE PAGE 6

premiere event for the charity organization that normally is held at the North Shore Rotary Pavilion with food and auction

attaching most of the local communities.

Rotarians distinguished themselves in multiple charity participations, funded by this event. With customers and Rotarians present at the drawing, the dealership was just below Covid-19 limitations.

Waste Pits Virtual meeting 30% Remediation Report on schedule

HIGHLANDS -- The San Jacinto River Coalition and its sister organization, THEA held its monthly meeting last Tuesday night by video instead of its usual in-person meet.

The group had skipped its March meeting due to the scheduled wedding of its president, Jackie Young (now Young Medcalf). Then they were faced with the inability to have its April meeting at the community center, due to the lockdown of county facilities because of the Covid-19 flu epidemic. Undaunted, Ms. Medcalf recorded a report which included news of the SJR Waste Pits, the Superfund Jones Road site in Cypress, and even her wedding.

A major question on the minds of many of the Coalition members, and others in the community, is whether the Covid-19 lockdown will affect the schedule of removal of the waste pits. Jackie has discussed this with the EPA project manager, Gary Baumgarten, and reports that work is continuing at the EPA, the engineering consultants, and even on-site remedial repair work. There is no indication of a



Jackie Young

major delay in the milestone dates of the project, he said.

On-site work is in the river just beyond the north edge of the cap, where the storm Imelda caused erosion of the river bed. Contractors are repairing and restoring much of the material that washed away, to protect the cap. The company in charge of the on-site work has submitted an addendum to their Health and Safety work plan to the EPA, indicating additional protection for their workers from the Covid-19 virus.

THEA's short term goal is to protect the public and the environment from any contamination from the tox-

See Virtul Meeting, Page 3

COMMUNITY WATCH

Man captured, wanted for murder of woman floating in SJ River

CHANNELVIEW -- A man wanted in the murder of a woman found in the San Jacinto River in April of 2019, led deputies on a pursuit after they tried to conduct a traffic stop on his vehicle.

Deputies and Homicide investigators were in the 3500 block of the N. Sam Houston Parkway W when 32-year-old Christopher Tate fled and crashed his vehicle after a small pursuit. Tate then ran to a nearby Holiday Inn under construction.

Deputies evacuated workers from the building and set a perimeter around the building.

The SWAT team was deployed to the site and a methodical search of the building was conducted.

Tate was located after a few hours hiding in the building.

On Monday, April 15, 2019, at around 5:00 p.m. District 3 deputies responded to 17407 River Rd. in reference to a body in the San Jacinto River.

When deputies arrived on the scene, a witness directed them to the west river bank, adjacent to a vacant lot.

There they found the body of a female now identified as Tera Rose Hoseck, 32, floating in the water.

The victim appeared to

have been in the water for several hours and suffered multiple injuries to her face and body.

The Sheriff's Office Marine Unit recovered Ms. Hoseck's body. Homicide investigators responded to the scene and investigated the death.

The Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences responded to the scene and transported the body to their office for an autopsy. The manner of death was multiple stab wounds to the body.

Investigators have now charged Tate with murder.

The motive for the murder of Tera Rose Hoseck is still under investigation.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Channelview ISD student awarded Bill and Melinda Gates Scholarship

May 14, 2020 --Channelview High School Valedictorian Dewayne Benson is among the 300 students in the country to receive the prestigious Gates Scholarship. This academic school year, 36,500 students applied, putting Benson in the less than 1 percent of students who were awarded the scholarship.

In addition to his academic achievements, Benson has also shown strength and perseverance following a bus accident in Alabama. In 2018, members of the Channelview High School (CHS) marching band were returning from a school trip in Flori-

da when their charter bus plunged into a ravine.

"It's insane to think how far I have come in high school -- two years ago, I was stuck in the bottom of a ravine in the band bus crash," Benson said. "Now, I am a Gates Scholar, valedictorian, and am graduating with a whole degree to my name."

Benson also attended San Jacinto Community College and will be graduating high school with an associates degree. In order to be admitted into the San Jacinto Community College's MECA program (Modified Early College Academy, the dual credit



Channelview High School Valedictorian Dewayne Benson

See Bill Gates Scholarship, Page 8

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Barrett Station Community Center
11901 Mulberry St.
Barrett, TX 77532

Flukinger Community Center
16003 Lorenzo,
Channelview, TX 77530

Houston Health Department and partners to offer more than a dozen free COVID-19 test sites week of May 18

HOUSTON - Houstonians will continue to benefit from easier access to free COVID-19 tests as the Houston Health Department and its partner agencies offer 13 testing sites across the city the week of May 18, focusing on vulnerable communities.

Texas Division of Emergency Management
The Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) and the health department will open four drive-thru test sites at these locations:
Hilliard Elementary School, 8115 East Houston Street, May 18-20
Yolanda Black Navarro Middle School, 5100 Polk Street, May 18-20
B.C. Elmore Elementary School, 8200 Tate Street, May 21-23
John R. Harris Elementary School, 801 Broadway Street, May 21-23
TDEM sites require appointments, obtained by calling 512-883-2400 or visiting txcovidtest.org. The sites will open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. or until each reaches its daily capacity of 250 tests.

United Memorial Medical Center
United Memorial Medical Center (UMMC) and the health department will extend operations at an existing site and open five new drive-thru sites May 18-22 at these locations:
Fonwood Early Childhood Center, 9709 Mesa Drive, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Forest Brook Middle School, 7525 Tidwell Road, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
United Memorial Medical Center, 510 W Tidwell Road, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Cullen Middle School, 6900 Scott Street, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Griggs EC/PK/K School, 801 Regional Park Drive, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
The Houston Community College-Southeast testing site, 6815 Rustic Street, which opened May 7, will continue operations through May 22 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
UMMC sites do not require people to have symptoms or appointments and have a daily capacity of 250 tests each.
People needing information about UMMC test sites can call 1-866-333-COVID or visit ummcscreening.com.

Houston Health Department Community-Based Sites
The health department continues to operate two free drive-thru COVID-19 community-based testing sites open to anyone, regardless of symptoms. Each site has capacity for 500 tests per day and opens daily until capacity is reached.
People must call the department's COVID-19 Call Center at 832-393-4220 to receive an access code and directions to the nearest community-based site.

Kroger Health
Kroger Health and the health department will operate a free drive-thru test site at the Acres Homes Multi-Service Center, 6719 W. Montgomery Drive, May 19-23.
The site requires appointments by visiting krogerhealth.com/covidtesting. The site will operate 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. or until reaching its daily capacity of 175 tests.

Federally Qualified Health Centers
The health department is also providing test kits, lab access and equipment to four local Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) so they can expand their COVID-19 testing capacity. The centers and phone numbers people can call to set up testing appointments are:
Spring Branch Community Health Center, 713-462-6565
El Centro de Corazon, 713-660-1880
Avenue 360 Health and Wellness, 713-426-0027 and
Lone Star Circle of Care at the University of Houston, 877-596-6192.
FQHC patients pay what they can afford, based on income and family size, and are not denied services due to inability to pay or lack of insurance.
Houstonians should visit HoustonEmergency.org/covid19 for test site information and updates about the COVID-19 response.

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CROSBY'S HOME TOWN HOME CARE

COMMUNITY NEWS

Commissioners Court Approves \$30M Fund for Equitable Economic Relief for Vulnerable Residents

A \$30 Million COVID-19 Relief Fund for Harris County

By David Ellison

Harris County Commissioners Court voted to provide economic relief for up to 25,000 Harris County families who are suffering because of the pandemic. Proposed by Precinct One Commissioner Rodney Ellis, the \$30 million COVID-19 Relief Fund will help our most vulnerable residents pay for rent, food, medical care, child care and other basic needs.

The Harris County COVID-19 Relief Fund (HCCRF) -- which will be distributed equitably throughout the county -- will provide \$1,200 for households of one to four residents, and \$1,500 for households of five-plus people. It is expected that between 20,000 and 25,000 households will benefit from the fund.

"The Coronavirus pandemic has created both a health and a financial crisis in our region," Commissioner Ellis said. "Our communities are hurting. And it is our duty as public servants to make sure that our most vulnerable



Precinct One Commissioner Rodney Ellis

residents, who were already living paycheck to paycheck, do not lose everything in the midst of this crisis."

Three weeks ago, Commissioners Court voted to tentatively approve \$15 million for the fund. As the public health crisis continues, the need for relief grows. Increasing the fund to \$30 million will allow doubled the reach and help more people, especially those who are now unemployed, ill or caring for someone who is sick.

"Not all job losses are equal," Commissioner Ellis said. "Our food service, health care and retail workers -- the backbone of our workforce, who are already struggling to make ends meet -- have been hit

the hardest. Federal funding helps, but it is not enough."

"The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Equal Impact Payments did not reach all low-income residents," said Commissioner Ellis. "Students and adults with disabilities who are listed as dependents and many households with immigrants are among those who won't receive a dime."

This fund will target communities who are struggling the most -- households below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI), victims of domestic violence, youth aged out of foster care, and those in homeless shelters.

The county's Relief Fund will be managed by the Greater Houston Community Foundation, which already is managing a COVID-19 relief fund. The Foundation has the knowledge, capacity, values and community trust to administer the fund. The Foundation will ensure that the funds reach all residents by working with nonprofit, community-based organizations that serve vulnerable communities and through an accessible

Judge Lina Hidalgo launches virus tracing program

Judge Lina Hidalgo deploys hundreds of contact tracers to assist in isolating coronavirus as Harris County reignites its economy.

Last Wednesday, May 13, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo announced the deployment of a small army of contract tracers to ensure that the county can limit spikes in COVID-19 cases that, if not traced, could overwhelm the county's healthcare system. These measures follow the Judge's plans to continue the focus on testing, tracing and treatment as Harris County phases in more public activity and reignites its economy.

Epidemiologists and other medical experts at Harris County Public Health will complete training of 200 workers this week and another 100 by next week. Current and



Judge Lina Hidalgo and contract tracers team.

former top health officials and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say contact tracing is an essential component to effectively controlling further outbreaks. Hidalgo stressed that the team of "disease detectives" are diverse members of the Harris County community.

From college students to recently laid-off energy sector employees, the tracers will be communicating with their fellow neighbors to identify how the virus might be spreading so that the region can be smarter and more efficient about isolating risk.

Virtual Meeting,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ins in the waste pits. Their long-term goal, Jackie says, is to continue work on removal and relocation and storage of the dioxins and other toxic materials.

The work plan called for a 30% Design Report by the end of May for the North impoundment, but even though it may be ready, due to the lockdown that prohibits groups of more than 10, the EPA has indicated that they will not make a quarterly report in person to the Highlands and Channel-

view communities, as originally planned.

Workers on the site have discovered that some of the waste pits are deeper than originally thought. Instead of 12 to 14 feet, some areas of the site have toxins as deep as 25 feet. Since this means more material must be removed, the EPA indicates the removal process will take longer, perhaps 4 years instead of 2. This will require additional negotiations with the Responsible

Parties.

The coalition was also concerned about a new Corps of Engineers permit, that will allow TxDOT to contract to build new bumpers and supports to protect the IH-10 bridge from accidents that have shut it down twice this year. The permit states that new Dolphin structures, or bumpers, will be built to replace the three in place that are severely damaged, and new fender piling under the bridge for additional support.



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MAY 21, 2020
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PICK-UP LOCATIONS

NORTH SHORE

North Channel Chamber Office, I-10 in Woodforest Bank Bldg
Pineforest Jewelry, Uvalde Rd
Carter-Conley Funeral Home, 13701 Corpus Christi St.
San Jacinto College North, Student Center & Library
Fonteno Court House, Wallisville Rd
Sellers Brothers Market, Uvalde Rd
YMCA, Wallisville Rd.
Kroger's, Woodforest @ Beltway 8
Sen. Sylvia Garcia office, in Woodforest Bank Bldg
North Channel Library, Wallisville Rd
Water District # 21, Sheldon Rd

CLOVERLEAF

HC WCID #36, Hollywood St
Grayson Community Center, Corpus Christi St
Galena Park Admin Building, Beltway 8 at Woodforest
CommunityBank of Texas, I-10 E @ Freeport
North Channel Assistance Ministries, Bonham @ Freeport
Chevron, I-10 West

JACINTO CITY

City Hall, Main Street
Community Center/Senior Center, Oates Rd
Capital Bank, I-10 E
Jacinto City Branch Library, Akron St
State Rep Ana Hernandez office, Mercury Drive
Sellers Brothers Market, Market St
Market Street Feed Store, Market St
Mr. Mercury Gas Station, Mercury Dr
Jacinto City Parks & Recreation, Mercury Dr
Chevron, Market St

GALENA PARK

Baggett Community Center, Keene St
Galena Park City Hall, Clinton Drive
Galena Park Library, Keene St
United Comm. Credit Union, 16th St
Galena Park Community Ctr, Keene St
Middleton Super Market, Clinton Dr
Exxon King Fuel, Clinton Dr
Galena Park Medical Clinic, Clinton Dr

SHELDON

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Sheldon ISD Transportation
HCA Houston 24/7, Beltway 8

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REV 01/2020

Memorial Day Heroes
By the American Legion

Every crisis has new heroes. During the 9/11 attacks, they were the first responders running into burning and crumbling buildings as others ran out. Now, during the Coronavirus pandemic, the most visible heroes are the health care professionals, who are saving others and risking their own lives while doing so.

These heroes have much in common with the people that we honor today – America's fallen veterans. They are men and women who have sacrificed their own lives so others could live. They are both elite and ordinary. They are elite in the sense of character. Giving your life so others could live is the ultimate definition of selfless.

They are ordinary in the fact that they represent the diverse fabric of our country. They are rich and poor, black and white, male and female. They come from every ethnicity and background. In short, they looked like anyone of us.

As we celebrate the selfless and untiring performances of the healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, it brings to mind the military medics, doctors and nurses who sacrificed their lives while treating others on the battlefield.

One such hero was Pharmacist Mate Third Class Jack Williams. The Navy Reserve corpsman was only 20 years old when he landed on Iwo Jima 75 years ago.

On March 3, 1945, James Naughton, a Marine in Williams' unit, was wounded by a grenade. While under intense enemy fire, Williams dragged Naughton to a shallow depression and treated his wounds. Williams used his own body as a screen and was shot four times. Yet he continued.

After he treated Naughton, Williams dressed his own wounds. He then proceeded to treat another Marine, despite his own immense pain. While heading to the rear, he was hit by a sniper's bullet and killed. For his actions, Petty Officer Williams was awarded the Medal of Honor.

We also remember Army veterans like Lieutenant Sharon Lane.

According to her biographer, Philip Bigler, Lt. Lane threw herself into her work as a nurse. While serving in Colorado, she requested a transfer to Vietnam.

"There, at least, you are busy 12 hours a day, six or seven days a week," she said in a 1968 letter to her parents.

Her dedication was obvious, even as she treated enemy Viet Cong soldiers who would return the favor by kicking, cursing and spitting at their American captors.

In the early morning of June 8, 1969, Sharon's tour of duty ended. A Soviet-built rocket struck the hospital. Lieutenant Sharon A. Lane was killed in action at age 25.

If she were still here, her skills as a nurse might still be benefiting us during the current crisis. But not all of the heroes working during the COVID-19 pandemic are in the healthcare industry. Grocers, first responders, delivery workers and drive-through restaurant employees are just a few of the many people that we rely on to provide vital services for society while risking their own safety.

The military also has heroes in every occupational field. Truck drivers, cooks and administrative clerks have all paid the ultimate price. At sea, on land or in the air – military service requires great risk.

Roy Knight, Jr. was a pilot in the U.S. Air Force. On May 19, 1967, he was shot down while attacking a target on the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos. He was posthumously promoted to colonel. Last year, a joint team from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency discovered and later identified Col. Knight's remains.

When his remains arrived at Dallas's Love Field, a crowd had gathered to witness the dignified transfer of the flag-draped casket from the Southwest Airlines jet into the receptive arms of the military honor guard. One observer reported that the entire crowd fell silent.

The Southwest flight was piloted by another Air Force veteran, Col. Knight's son, Bryan. Bryan Knight was only five-years-old when he said goodbye to his father as the elder Knight left for Vietnam.

This is yet another legacy that these heroes leave behind. A legacy that includes their sons, daughters, grieving parents, grandparents and friends.

Their heroic acts are sometimes performed to protect those with whom they serve. Corporal Jason Dunham was a squad leader with the Third Battalion, 7th Marines in Iraq.

On April 14, 2004, his squad approached a Toyota Land Cruiser. After his squad discovered AK-47s in the vehicle, the enemy insurgent exited and engaged in hand-to-hand fighting with the unit. The driver dropped a grenade.

To save his fellow Marines, Corporal Dunham made the ultimate sacrifice. He threw himself on the grenade and tried to use his helmet to shield the blast. Severely wounded by the grenade's fragments, Cpl. Dunham was taken off life-support eight days later.

Corporal Dunham died so other Marines could live. He, too, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his gallantry.

Approximately one million men and women of the U.S. military have lost their lives in defense of our nation since the founding of this great Republic.

Not all have died from enemy fire. Some have died from diseases that have too often festered around war zones. Often times, deaths from disease and accidents outnumbered casualties caused by enemy weapons.

During the Spanish American War, 60 soldiers of the all-black 24th Infantry Regiment volunteered to serve as nurses. Thirty-six of them would later die of yellow fever or malaria.

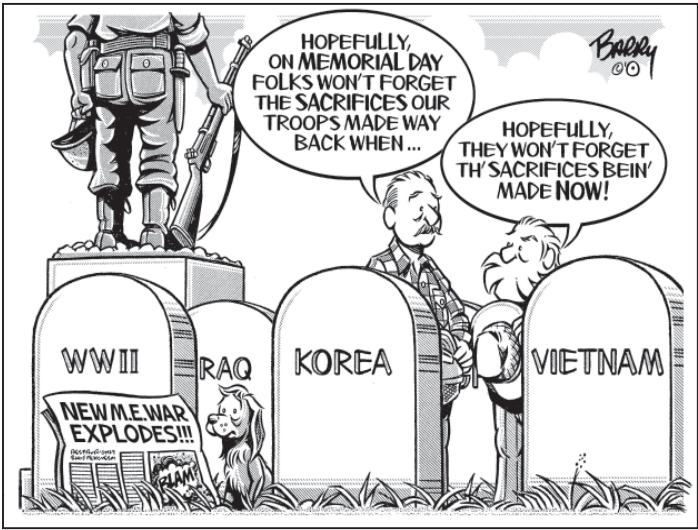
A generation later, the flu would kill nearly 16,000 U.S. soldiers in France during World War I. Another 30,000 American servicemembers died in stateside camps. These men and women could have isolated safely in their homes. But they knew they had an important job to do. A mission to accomplish. They were all on a mission to serve.

Even when the enemy is an invisible virus or a microscopic germ, the sacrifices made are just as meaningful. The U.S. military has already lost servicemembers to COVID-19.

This Memorial Day as we continue to honor those who fell for us in battle, let's also pause to remember those who have also sacrificed their lives while serving others.

May God bless them and may God bless you for remembering them here today.

Thank you.



Texas bolsters efforts to reduce spread of COVID-19

AUSTIN — Testing, sanitizing and emergency food benefits increased as Texas entered its third month of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

Notably, Gov. Greg Abbott released a statement concerning an outbreak of the deadly coronavirus in Amarillo, where more than 700 cases were reported on May 16. The report came after the governor's Surge Response Teams conducted site surveys and testing in high-risk areas, including meat-packing facilities in the Amarillo area. Two more weeks of testing would be conducted in high-risk areas, Abbott said.

Abbott on May 13 announced that Texas National Guard disinfection teams operating in coordination with the Texas Department of State Health Services have been deployed to help limit the spread of the deadly coronavirus in nursing homes.

Major Gen. Tracy R. Norris, adjutant general of Texas National Guard, said each of the six teams on duty across the state received training from the Texas Military Department's 6th Civil Support Team, which specializes in manmade and natural disaster assessment and rapid response in hazardous environments.

The Texas National Guard also fights the COVID-19 pandemic by providing personal protective equipment manufacturing support, food bank support, mobile COVID-19 testing and points of distribution for essential items.

Last week, as more Texans increased public activities, official data showed COVID-19 is not contained. On May 17, cumulative figures posted by the Texas Department of State Health Services showed that some 47,784 people in Texas had been diagnosed with COVID-19 and 1,336 deaths resulting from the influenza-like virus had been confirmed.

Order: Test nursing homes

Gov. Abbott on May 11 directed the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, the Texas Division of Emergency Management and the Texas Department of State Health Services to test 100% of residents and staff in Texas nursing homes. The collaboration of those agencies, Abbott said, would "ensure that any potential clusters of COVID-19 cases in nursing homes are quickly detected and contained."

Food benefits announced

Gov. Abbott on May 12 announced that the Texas Health and Human Services Commission received approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide more than \$1 billion in food benefits through the federal Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer program to families with children who have temporarily lost ac-

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling

cess to free or discounted school meals due to COVID-19-related school closures.

The program, to be administered through the state health department, the Texas Department of Agriculture and Texas Education Agency, provides a one-time benefit of \$285 per child. The benefit can be used in the same way as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits to pay for groceries. Visit hhs.texas.gov/pebt to learn more.

Hospitals receive antiviral

The Texas Department of State Health Services, with FDA approval, on May 12 distributed 1,200 vials of the antiviral drug remdesivir to hospitals to treat patients with COVID-19.

Clinical trials of the antiviral drug reportedly have sped up by several days the recovery time of COVID-19 patients. Remdesivir was provided to the DSHS by the federal government from a supply donated by Gilead, the manufacturer.

Hospitals in these cities received shipments of remdesivir: Amarillo, Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, Laredo, Lubbock, McAllen, Odessa, San Antonio, Tyler and Waco.

Mail-in ballots thwarted

Texans who wanted to vote by mail to reduce their exposure to COVID-19 still must go to their polling place if they plan to cast an election ballot, pursuant to a stay granted by the Texas Supreme Court on May 15.

In effect, the stay accepts an argument lodged by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, who said Texas law prohibits a registered voter who is not disabled, not over age 65 and not an absentee from voting by mail-in ballot. Paxton said Texans should not be allowed to vote by mail merely because they fear contracting the deadly coronavirus if they must vote in person.

Texas Democratic Party Chair Gilberto Hinojosa issued a statement in response to the high court's action, saying, "This is a dark day for our democracy. The Republican Texas Supreme Court is wrong to force the people of Texas to choose between their health and their right to vote. They would have Texans die, just so they can hold on to power."

Sales tax holidays set

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar last week promoted the state's Water-Efficient Products and ENERGY STAR® sales tax holidays, May 23-25.

"Inefficient appliances and outdated water systems put a tremendous strain on our power grids and water supplies," Hegar said. "Even in these uncertain times, Texans can take advantage of this sales tax holiday to buy more energy-efficient items, support local businesses and save money. You can practice social distancing and other precautionary measures when shopping in person or shop online. Qualifying products are tax free."

More information is available at comptroller.texas.gov.

THE POSTSCRIPT
By Carrie Classon

"Chatting with a Tree"

Every day I look down the trail in either direction, checking to see if anyone is coming. I'd just as soon no one knew I was talking to a tree.

I take the same hike every day. There are a lot of trails and most folks try different trails on different days. I don't. I do my best thinking on my daily walk. I am not seeking variety. Some days I am seeking inspiration. Some days I'm looking for answers. Some days I just want a little escape. More and more lately, I've been looking for comfort.

I visit a particular tree. I walk by a lot of trees, but this pine is special. It may not be the oldest, but it's awfully old. It has survived at least a couple of major fires and still wears the blackened scars around its base. It has obviously had some close calls, but it is doing well now and it is not an exaggeration to say that this tree cheers me every single day I see it.

Every day, I risk a little embarrassment and have a word with my favorite tree.

I lean in close. "How're you doing?" I ask.

A few weeks ago, the potential embarrassment of being caught chatting with a tree carried a lot more weight. Right now, I'm happy to get some comfort—and perspective—wherever I can.

I don't really expect to hear anything back. (I tilt toward the edge at times but I haven't quite toppled over.) Still, I figure this tree has seen it all: fires and droughts, woodpeckers and chainsaws, lightning and windstorms. All around my tree are the remains of dead trees—some that died within my lifetime, some that died long before I was born. This tree has beaten the odds and is standing here today, letting me know it can be done.

Every morning I read the news and every day I realize with greater certainty that nothing is certain. I have friends and family who rely on theaters and churches and concert halls and ballrooms to make a living and right now, the only thing they know for sure is that they will not know for a very long time when or if they will get their livelihoods back.

My cousin who tours with an a cappella singing group and my brother-in-law who stage manages corporate events and my other cousin who is a minister—they're all wondering what their lives will look like in a month or a year's time. They are depressed and angry and confused and anxious in turn, but mostly they are uncertain because the times are uncertain.

In these times, my tree has become a lot more important to me. This tree has seen it all.

And, although the tree doesn't actually speak to me, it has a story to tell. Because somehow, this old tree managed to make it. It had some luck. It sits in a low spot, where there has been more water over the eons and where fires have been more likely to hop over. Misfortune is never equally shared and this tree has survived, not simply because it is strong, but because it is lucky.

I feel very lucky these days. I feel lucky that I can get out of my house and take these walks in nature, but luckier yet to be like this tree—in a place where there is enough water and the worst of the fire has passed over.

And no, I'm not embarrassed anymore to be chatting with a tree.

Till next time,
Carrie

Learn more at CarrieClasson.com.

Northside Baptist, Highlands Pastor Retires

Longtime Northside pastor, David R. Brumbelow, announced his retirement last January. It is to be effective June 1, 2020. His last Sunday as pastor will be Sunday morning, May 31, 2020 at 11am. A meal in his honor will be enjoyed immediately after the Worship Service.

Brother David has served as pastor of Northside Baptist Church of Highlands from 1991-2020. He previously pastored churches in Beeville and Henderson, TX. A graduate of ETBU and SWBTS, he has authored two books while at Northside: A book about his preacher dad, Wit & Wisdom of Pastor Joe Brumbelow; and Ancient Wine and the Bible: The Case for Abstinence. Both are available on the internet.

"I will greatly miss the



people of Northside," said Brumbelow, "but I have no doubt the Lord is leading in this direction. God has provided in a number of ways for my retirement. I will always fondly remember so many at Northside that were faithful and encouraging during my time there. I appreciate them putting up with me all these years! And, I remember many who are now in

Heaven because of their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior."

Brumbelow has taught Bible courses at Lee College and San Jacinto College, Pasadena. He served from 1992-2020 as Baptist Student Ministry Director at Lee College, Baytown. "Again, I have great memories of students, faculty, staff, security, administration at Lee College," stated Brumbelow. "They will be missed."

Brumbelow will retire to the Brazoria, TX area where he loves the outdoors (gardening, cows, fruit trees, etc.), and will continue to be involved in church ministry. He will continue to write at gulfoastpastor.blogspot.com. His new address is P.O. Box 300, Lake Jackson, TX 77566.

Happy 103rd Birthday to Mrs. Mamie Lewis



Mrs. Mamie Lewis was born in Louisiana on May 15, 1917- making her the oldest living resident of Barrett Station at 103 years. Mrs. Lewis relocated to Texas with her husband and retired from Crosby ISD. Family, friends, and neighbors lined up by the dozens for their turn to wave and shout their birthday wishes to the towns matriarch, most in a drive by parade. A senior who regularly attends the Barrett Station/ Riley Community Center enjoyed her parade an special recognition by Constable Sherman Eagleton.

T-Mobil donates to Goose Creek CISD Education Foundation

T-Mobile donated \$25,000 to Goose Creek CISD to help meet the needs of students during the COVID-19 crisis. Erika Foster, director of the Goose Creek CISD Education Foundation, accepted the donation on behalf of the foundation, a nonprofit organization which helps support the district's students and staff.

"School districts nationwide have been turned upside down and are seeing the impact on everything from disruption to the physical learning environment to more and more students facing food insecurity," said Brigitta Witt, vice president, Social Impact & Sustainability, T-Mobile. "The Goose Creek CISD Education Foundation has really stepped up to address a multitude of issues. We're grateful that our T-Mobile teams in the Houston area identified the opportunity to serve and had the means to quickly help the district continue supporting students and their families."

The donation from T-Mobile will be applied to an area of district need as determined by Goose Creek administrators and the Education Foundation board.

"The kindness and generosity of T-Mobile is greatly appreciated as Goose Creek CISD faces the many chal-



Savannah Marie Pineda, who just finished fifth grade at Bowie Elementary, shows her appreciation to T-Mobile for the \$25,000 donation to the Goose Creek CISD Education Foundation to help meet the needs of students during the COVID-19 crisis.

lenges this situation has imposed on our district and our families," Dr. Randal O'Brien, Goose Creek CISD superintendent, said. "We recognized the needs of our community, and we immediately addressed those needs, creating grab and go meal distribution sites and supplying instructional packets

as well as iPad checkout stations to allow students to continue to receive nutritious meals and online instruction. Working with our community partners, such as T-Mobile, we can continue to help our families overcome obstacles during this challenging time."

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ROMANS 8:18

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I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

-- 1 JOHN 4:18

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

--2 Timothy 1:7

ASK THE EXPERT



Social Security Matters

by AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor Russell Gloor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Ask Rusty – Should My Wife Take Her Social Security at Age 62?

Dear Rusty: I have been advised by my financial planner to start my wife's social security benefits at the age of 62 (she is now 61). I am 65 and still employed, not on Medicare, and not taking social security benefits. My wife's benefits are much less than mine. I hope to wait until age 70 before starting my benefits. My income is currently \$160,000. Do you see this as a wise choice to start my wife's SS benefits at age 62? Signed: Planning Ahead

Dear Planning: Whether your wife should start her benefits at age 62 depends upon whether her own benefit at age 70 would be more than she is entitled to as your spouse at her full retirement age (FRA). You can get these estimates from Social Security. If her own benefit would eventually be higher than her spousal benefit from you, she can wait to get her own higher benefit at age 70 (as you are). But if her benefit as your spouse will be the highest she can attain, then claiming her own benefit before you claim yours could be a good choice, but there are some things to consider if she does that:

First, if your wife claims at age 62 (or any age before her FRA), that will mean that her eventual spousal benefit when she claims it (when you claim your SS) will be less than 50% of the benefit you are entitled to at your full retirement age. Taking her own benefit earlier than her FRA will mean her spousal benefit from you will be reduced to less than half of your FRA benefit amount, even if that spousal benefit starts after she has reached her FRA.

Second, if your wife is still working, by claiming

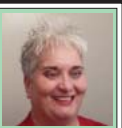
her own benefit before her FRA she will be subject to Social Security's "earnings test" which limits the amount of money she can make without SS taking back some of her benefits. For 2020, the annual earnings limit is \$18,240 (changes annually) and SS will take back benefits equal to half of any earnings which exceed that amount. The earnings limit becomes less severe during the year your wife reaches her FRA and goes away entirely after she reaches her FRA, but if she works while collecting early SS benefits the earnings limit could affect her benefits.

Third, your wife's Social Security benefits will become part of your taxable income (assuming you file "married-jointly"). Taxation of your wife's Social Security benefits will be determined based upon your combined income if you file your taxes as a married couple. At your combined earnings level, up to 85% of your wife's SS benefits will become part of your taxable income.

I'm not suggesting you not follow your financial planner's advice; I only want to make sure you're aware of all the factors involved when benefits are claimed early. Sometimes, a wife claiming at age 62 is a prudent choice as your financial planner has suggested. But sometimes understanding the above factors may lead to a different strategy.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

CHARLOTTE'S WEB



Real Issues

Many years ago, I heard one of my favorite people state the following "If you are watching television and you notice a crack in the wall, you do not move furniture in front of the crack, you do not hang a picture over the crack, you do not paint the wall, nor add paneling or wall paper. You repair the foundation."

Perhaps in a perfect world this would be possible. Yet our world has many issues to be solved before it comes close to being perfect. In the past week, I have learned about several real needs in our community. I am blessed to know of many resources as well as many individuals who have a heart of compassion, yet sometimes the issues are so complex that all I can do is share the needs and ask for your help.

To protect the identity of those in crisis, I will not list their names but instead label them as Neighbor 1 through Neighbor 3.

Neighbor 1--- She is a 27-year-old with two children. Her abusive, drug dealing husband has additional children that she has provided for and cared for over the past eight years. In 2018, he entered prison and will be paroled to her home in August. She stated that she is afraid that if she said no to her home as the parole location, he would find a way to take the children and disappear to Mexico. She feels as though she was manipulated into saying it was okay and she feels she has no family support. She is unemployed, has some medical issues due to the abuse she received from him.

Neighbor 2--- He is 26-year-old father who lost his mother to cancer when he was 16. His father was convicted in 2014 for assaulting his infant son and causing permanent brain damage. Consequently, the father received 40-year sentence to prison. Left with no parents to help

or guide him, he has spent the past decade lost in depression, unemployment, self-medicating with drugs and alcohol and is now homeless under a bridge in the area. His daughter cries often and questions where her dad is at.

Neighbor 3--- After her 80-year-old mother suffered a stroke recently, this lady cried out for help. She believes that many of the health issues that led to her mother's stroke are related to her 51-year-old brother. In 2013, he assaulted their mother and was placed on probation. Yet within months the brother threatened the mother to a place where she felt she had no choice but to open her home to her mentally ill son who was now self-medicating with street drugs and alcohol. Since being placed on probation, he stole his mother's car, totaled it and left her with no vehicle. On numerous occasions, the family has contacted his probation officer, yet their requests have fallen through the cracks. Now that the mother will need around-the-clock care, the family wants the son removed permanently from the home.

These are real issues in our community. These are our neighbors who have needs. We as a community need to help find answers. If you can help, please contact me at charlotte.jackson@yahoo.com

ASK DIAMOND JIM



Diamond Jim: "We're all in this together?"

On the radio, the television, and social media, I keep hearing "We're all in this together". Sounds so sweet, doesn't it? Kind of like we're all sitting around a campfire singing songs and eating s'mores. What a bunch of garbage.

No, we're not all in this together!

Every government employee that is/was working from home did so with full pay and benefits. They didn't take a cut in pay. They didn't lose their job. Their job is still there for them to go back to. As is usually the case with politicians, bureaucrats, actors, and sports figures, they risked nothing and lost nothing.

No, we're not all in this together!

When this is all said and done, about 100,000 small businesses nationwide will have been closed forever. Let's say that, on average, each small business employed 5 people (keep in mind that some small businesses employ only 1 person while others employ 200). That's 500,000+ Americans who will have lost their jobs. 100,000+ business owners who were forced to give up their dream, their blood, sweat, tears, and years of dedicated work ... only to lose it all.

No, we're not all in this together!

I say this to all of the ignorant politicians, mindless bureaucrats, wealthy actors, and malignant sports figures ... Your little paid vacation of a few weeks away from

your "job" is nothing compared to the extensive amount of work, long hours, and stress that I've had to endure just to keep the doors open at Pineforest Jewelry. Own a company and work a real job where both risk and reward are possible. Worry during many sleepless nights how you'll be able to make payroll for the people that sacrifice for you day in and day out and depend on you to be able to put food on their tables. Spend countless nights working when you have to miss family meals, parties, and other events because you must keep your promise to your customer and deliver ON TIME! That's when you know that your word and your character have meaning.

No, we're not all in this together! Not everyone suffers the same.

SO, please don't tell me "we're all in this together". You have no idea, no idea at all, what it takes to run a small business. What a shame.

Thank you for reading the "Ask Diamond Jim" column and for supporting the North Channel Star Newspaper!

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.

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2	6670	Kara Silman	Shawn Silman	2. Restaurant Gift card package: \$200 Bonfire Wings donated by Oscar Taylor, \$100 El Tajano, \$100 Arment.
3	2247	Yvonne Johnson	Paul Drexler	3. \$100 Salgrass Steakhouse gift card
4	1281	GA Wimberly	B.R. Hendrix	3. 35GB iPad donated by Rotarian Don Spin. 3 wooden Texas themed flags donated by Rotarian Jack Dudley
5	2315	Jack Moreno	Dr. Tam Hallisey	4. YETI 35 Cooler donated by San Jacinto College Academic Instructional Team. \$200 Food Town gift cards
6	252	Janice Jimenez	Jose Jimenez	5. Hotel Staycation package: Hyatt Regency Galleria one night stay. One night stay @ Hotel Alexandra. Meet one night weekend stay. Picnic table donated by Scott Stephens.
7	2550	J.B. Boichaux	David Mendez	6. HLSSR Package/Choice #1 - 6 Tickets to the 2021 Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo donated by Rotarian L. Everett with Everett Industrial Supply.
8	1761	Renee Cooper	Charles Grant	7. 3 night stay at Visions Sea beach house in Crystal Beach. Donated by Doc and Donna Nino.
9	2172	Dr. Farkas	Mike Bilinski	8. Fishing Trip donated by Rotarian Mark St. Claire.
10	0236	Dr. VL Willits	B.R. Hendrix	9. Whole Hog cut & wrapped from the 2020 Sheldon FFA Auction donated by North Shore Rotarians.
11	222	Rissy Winans	B.R. Hendrix	10. \$100 gift card Cam De Brazil. \$100 Pappas Gift Card. Bose Soundlink Revolve. Framed and Signed Alex Bregman photo. Framed and signed Garrett Cole Astor photo
12	1042	Sheila Moore	Derrill Painter	11. Picnic table donated by Scott Stephens.
13	1518	SE Hartley	Dr. Don Nino	11. T.F. Lodge 3 night get away in College Station.
14	2330	Genald Simpson	Tammy Morrison	12. Half side of beef cut & wrapped from 2020 Sheldon FFA Auction donated by North Shore Rotarians
15	1975	Walter Branson	John Painter	13. HLSSR Package/Choice #2 - 6 Tickets to the 2021 Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo donated by Rotarian Everett with Everett Industrial Supply. (Package choice #2).
16	0245	Todd Holloway	B.R. Hendrix	14. Deluxe Fireworks Package donated by Richard Fallin with Top Dog Fireworks.
17	0247	Kenneth Lavigne	B.R. Hendrix	15. Woodlands Hyatt Condo stay. With tickets to a concert TBD.
18	1220	Jim Ciba K J	Jim Mills	16. City Wide YMCA Family Membership donated by WD Lay Family YMCA
19	1303	Eddie Miller	Eddie Miller	17. 3 rounds of golf for 4 w/ cart for 4 @ Eagle Pointe Golf Club. Donated by Rotarian Bill Bowen. Wooden AAM flag donated by Rotarian Jack Dudley
20	2346	Alice Adams	Wayne Aguin	18. Deluxe Fireworks Package donated by Richard Fallin with Top Dog Fireworks.
				19. Cruise for two OR \$1000 gift cards.
				20. 2020 Chevrolet Colorado or Camaro

COMMUNITY NEWS

Texas Opens,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Bars (May 22)
Aquariums and Natural Caverns (May 22)
Zoos (May 29)
Day Youth Camps (May 31)
Overnight Youth Camps (May 31)
Youth Sports (May 31)
Certain professional sports without in-person spectators (May 31)

All sporting and camp activities are required to adhere by special safety standards, and minimum standard health protocols have been established for all newly-announced opened services and activities. Businesses located in office buildings may also open but must limit their occupancy to the greater of 10 employees or 25% of their workforce.

Additionally, restaurants may expand their occupancy to 50% beginning May 22. Bars—including wine tasting rooms, craft breweries, and similar businesses—may open at 25% occupancy but like restaurants, these occupancy limits do not apply to outdoor areas that maintain safe distancing among parties.

Opened services and activities under Phase II are subject to certain occupancy limits and health and safety protocols. For details and a full list of guidelines, openings, and relevant dates, visit www.gov.texas.gov/open-texas.

Certain counties experiencing surges in COVID-19 cases will have their beginning date of Phase II delayed until May 29. These counties include El Paso, Randall, Potter, Moore, and Deaf Smith. Surge Response Teams are actively working in these areas to increase testing, maintain hospital capacity, and ensure that COVID-19 is contained and mitigated.

During his remarks, the Governor also presented information on the state's hospitalization and positivity rates—two metrics the Governor and his team of medical experts have used to inform the state's ongoing plan to safely and strategically open.

PROFILE: FFA MEMBER Galena Park HS senior Alayna Cain-Matheny

Alayna Cain-Matheny is a senior at Galena Park High School. She will be graduating as the district's 2nd-ever student that's been a member of the Galena Park FFA for 10 years. Her brother Joshua Matheny graduated in 2012 as the district's 1st-ever 10 year FFA member.

Their sister Jennifer Matheny (c/o 2004) as a high school member pushed to create the junior FFA program. Jennifer's Daughter/Alayna's Niece, Jorja Beall (c/o 2026) is currently a member of the Galena Park FFA, planning to carry on the family tradition after Alayna graduates this June.

Alayna joined the FFA as soon as she was old enough and has actively been showing livestock and competing in other events like home Economics, photography, cook offs at many shows like the Harris county fair, Hous-



ducted and pinned into the National Honor society and was on the GPHS softball, volleyball and cheerleading teams. She has also received an almost full ride scholarship to the University of Texas in San Antonio, all her housing, schooling, books, travel are being paid for by that scholarship.

Thanks to the help of being active in Agriculture



ton Rodeo and every year at the Galena Park ISD livestock show earning her several grand champion awards. She's caught a calf in the Austin, San Antonio and Houston Calf Scrambles. Showing her Heifer the following year at those shows along with the Fort Worth rodeo, Galena Park ISD and many other local shows. She's also helped other GPISD students with showing their Chickens and rabbits. Along with helping to feed their Livestock at the Ag. Barn while she was there tending to her own.

She is also in multiple pre-AP classes and dual credit classes, member of the local 4-H, was just in-

education she was taught the responsibility, dedication and hard work that is needed for all her activities and more so later in life. Currently the GPISD Agricultural facility that she and so many others grew up in is closed, affecting the membership of both the North Shore and the Galena Park FFA Chapters.

This year the district has decided to no longer have a livestock show in November. Despite all that Alayna and her family still believe in the importance of Agriculture Education and the endless possibilities it provides.

-- Contributed by Jennifer Matheny-Beall

SHELDON ISD King High School Baseball PLayers sign letters of intent to play at college level



Congratulations to C. E. King High School senior baseball players Noe Balderas and Henry Williams for signing letters of intent to play at the collegiate level. Balderas will be attending LeTourneau University in Longview, and Williams will be playing at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio.

Sheldon ISD seniors prepare for virtual graduation

C. E. King High School seniors have continued to keep their spirits high as they have been busy preparing for a "virtual" graduation celebration set for May 29 (the original commencement date). Also, Sheldon ISD has plans to host a traditional graduation ceremony for all seniors very soon at the new Sheldon ISD Panther Stadium. Additional information will be provided at a later date.



Bill Gates Scholarship,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

program that allows students to pursue their associates degree while still in high school) Benson took the College Board's TSI Accuplacer abilities test his sophomore year and earned a perfect score in all three sections.

The scholarship covers tuition, room, board, and books, to any accredited U.S. college of the student's choice. Benson plans to attend the University of Tex-

as in Austin to obtain a bachelor's degree in computer science and mathematics. He will also pursue his master's degree in computer science.

"This is an honor, an achievement, so difficult, so rare, that to have a second super-dude winÖ superlatives just will not do," said Channelview High School College and Career Advisor Steven Shoemaker.

Benson is the second Gates Scholarship recipient from CHS, another student was awarded the scholarship in 2017.

"This distinguished honor is a testament to not only our incredibly intelligent and hardworking students, but to our educators who dedicate their lives to ensuring our students are successful," said Superintendent Greg Ollis.

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0% APR for 84 months on select models in lieu of incentives. \$11.90 for every \$1,000 financed, with approved credit through GM Financial. 120 day defer payment available through GM Financial with approved credit. 2020 Tahoe, STK#LR109436. MSRP: \$45,270, \$2,322 dealer discount, 3,000 Factory rebate, \$1,000 conquest (must own 2006 or newer non-gm), \$38,948 Final Price, plus TT&L and doc fee of \$150. 2019 Chevy Corvette STK#K5123697. MSRP: \$74,325, \$5,997 dealer discount, \$68,428 Final Price, plus TT&L and doc fee of \$150. 0% for 72 months, \$16.67 for every \$1,000 financed, plus TT&L and doc fee of \$150. With approved credit Must take from dealer stock, see dealer for details Offer ends 5/28/20. 0% for 84 Months or 120 days deferral are exclusive.