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SUNDAY



CHANNEL CURRENTS

TUE. JULY 6 Lewis Spearman Memorial Service at Crosby Church

The public is invited to come to a Memorial Service at Crosby Church to celebrate the life of Lewis Spearman. Service at 7pm, Crosby Church, 5725 Hwy 90, Crosby. www.crosbychurch.com for more info.

SAT. JULY 10 Turner Chevy 7 Year Anniversary Celebration

You are invited to an Anniversary Celebration, Customer Appreciation Event, and Hot Rod & Classic Car Show. Saturday, July 10 from 10am to 3pm. Prize giveaways and more. 21001 Crosby Freeway, Crosby Texas. More info 281-328-4377.

SAT. JUNE 26 PURE CBD Grand Opening

Grand Opening at 12,750 Woodforest Blvd. Houston 77015. Saturday, 11am to 8:30pm. Complimentary healthy snacks and drinks. See AD in this paper for 15% discount on your CBD order. More information at www.purecbdhouston.com, instagram.com/purecbdhouston, and facebook.com/purecbdhouston.

ONGOING Precinct2gether Pct. 2 Summer Day Camp

There is still time to take advantage of our SUMMER Day Camp over the next 6 weeks. Proof of income is the only thing required to attend for FREE!

9 different locations throughout Harris County Precinct 2!
Monday - Thursday 8am-3pm
Friday 8am- Noon
Sign up for 1 week or all 6 weeks you tell us
Just call 713-274-2222 to get registered.

ONGOING Free food at Branch Libraries

Every Wednesday you can pick up Breakfast & Lunch for the week (7 boxed meals for each child under the age of 18) Courtesy Harris County Branch Library and the Houston Food Bank. Walk-ins welcome, no registration.

SUN. JULY 4 Crosby Church 4th of July Celebration!

6pm-9pm on July 4th 2021 at the Crosby Campus on US90. Fireworks at 9:15pm. Bring your lawn chairs and join us for the evening. Entertainments and Concessions, Kids Games available. 5725 Hwy 90, Crosby. www.crosbychurch.com for more info.

North Shore Rotary installs new officers

By Gilbert Hoffman

North Shore Rotary held their annual Installation Ceremony and Awards Banquet last Friday, June 11 at Monument Inn. Attending were club members and their families, and members of District 5890.

District 5890 guests included Director of Rotary International Suzi Howe and husband Bill, District Governor Scott Rainey and wife Martha, District Governor Elect Michelle Bohreer, and District Governor nominees Mindy Snyder and Heather Rimatto. Also attending was Assistant District Governor Brian Clements from the Galena Park/Jacinto City club.

New officers that were sworn in include President



NORTH SHORE ROTARY held their Annual Installation banquet to install new officers and board members. Seen above at right is Judge Lucia Bates, swearing in the new president, Shawn Silman (in the hat). Others sworn in include Ken Wimbley, president-elect, Lee Brown, secretary, Danna Nino, treasurer, and board members Fred Saunders, Alan Wolcik, Joe Coleman, Jared Dagley, and Mini Izaguirre.

Shawn Silman, Pres-elect Ken Wimbley, Secretary Lee Brown, and Treasurer Danna Nino.

Board members that were installed include Fred Saunders, Alan Wolcik, Joe Coleman, Jared Dagley, and Mini Izaguirre.

Awards to board members for two years of service included Eugene Dagley, Eddie Miller, Matt Davis, Beau Burris, and Bill Hendrix.

A number of awards were presented by outgoing president Lowell Everitt. Named Rotarian of the Year was Danna Nino.

A Rookie of the Year award went to Mini Izaguirre, Sargeant of Arms awards to Derrill Painter

Continued. See North Shore Rotary, page 2

SAN JAC BASEBALL/SOFTBALL TEAMS BOTH #3 IN NATION

PASADENA, Texas — The San Jacinto College baseball team ended the 2021 season finishing third at the Alpine Bank Junior College (JUCO) World Series last month in Junction, Colorado.

San Jac finished the season 51-15 overall after winning the Region XIV Tournament. The team's JUCO world series appearance is the 27th in program history.

"I am extremely proud of what this team has accomplished," said Head Coach Tom Arrington. "They were a team that



SAN JACINTO COLLEGE BASEBALL TEAM

faced many adversities, but remained diligent in the work ethic and support of one another. Win or lose, they will always be a championship team."

San Jac, seeded third in the national tournament, defeated eighth seed Miami Dade 11-3 to kick off the tournament. They then knocked off ninth seed, Shelton State 11-10 to advance against Central Arizona, defeating the Vaqueros 7-4. San Jac then fell 13-10 to McLennan Community College and

Continued. See San Jac Baseball, page 2

New principal at Whittier Elementary San Jac Softball finishes #3 in national tourney

By Allan Jamail

June 30, 2021 – Jacinto City, TX. The Houston Independent School District (HISD) has named Yamel Melchor as the Whittier Elementary School principal for 2021.

Principal Melchor was Whittier's Assistant Principal last year in 2020. She has been recognized with several awards, including First Year Assistant Principal of the Year and Tier



JAMEL MELCHOR

II Excellence in Leadership. Melchor began her edu-

ational journey with HISD in 2006 as a bilingual teacher at Cage Elementary School. After seven years as a teacher, she served as a teacher specialist and instructional specialist at Whittier. She earned her bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies from the University of Houston and her master's degree in educational administration from the University of Texas-Austin.

PASADENA, Texas — The San Jacinto College softball team finished the 2021 season with a third place finish at the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) national tournament last month in Yuma, Arizona.

San Jac finished the season 43-10 overall after

winning the Region XIV Tournament. The third place national finish is the highest ever in school history (five appearances).

"I am extremely proud of our entire team," said Head Coach Kelly Saenz.

Continued. See San Jac #3, page 3

WE LOSE LEWIS SPEARMAN

CROSBY – We are sad to report that our friend and colleague, Lewis Spearman, passed away on Friday June 25 peacefully at home. Lewis had been recovering from a cardiac procedure the previous week. Lewis has been an important part of the newspaper team since our start in 1994, and his contribution will be sorely missed. He had many friends in the Crosby and East Harris County area, and was active with the Crosby/Huffman Chamber and the Crosby Fair & Rodeo, and others.

Memorial arrangements will be announced later, but a service is planned at Crosby Church on Tuesday, July 6 at 7:00



LEWIS SPEARMAN

pm for friends in the community to pay their respects. There is also a benefit at Crosby Fairgrounds, Saturday July 10 at 4:00 pm. A go-fund-me account for expenses has been established at <http://gofund.me/7ac91f54>.

State GLO sends \$1.1b to Harris County

Harris County receiving \$1.1 billion in infrastructure and mitigation projects

AUSTIN – Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush has announced plans to sub-award \$750 million in light of a denial by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of a direct allocation of mitigation funding for Harris County. The General Land Office (GLO) will be drafting an action plan that will include a set aside of Community Development Block Grant Miti-

gation (CDBG-MIT) funding for \$750 million and direct at least \$500 million in additional funds to be distributed through the Regional Mitigation Program. Additional details will be released as the action plan amendment is finalized in accordance with HUD rules and federal requirements.

"Money from the federal government is, as always, tied up with endless mounds of red tape and bureaucracy," said Commissioner George P. Bush. "During Hurricane Harvey, Texans in Harris County undoubtedly suffered some of the costliest damage in the state. After considerable back and

forth with the Biden Administration's Department of Housing and Urban Development, the General Land Office will allocate \$750 million in funding for mitigation efforts in Harris County and continue to work around the federal government's ever-changing bureaucratic demands."

This brings the total infrastructure and mitigation investments in Harris County to more than \$1.1 billion. HUD gave a direct allocation of \$61,884,000 to the City of Houston in the CDBG-MIT. If approved by HUD, the

Continued. See \$1.1b to Harris County, page 9

San Jacinto Baseball #3,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

11-10 to Central Arizona to end their national title run. Infielder Sabin Ceballos was presented the Jay Tolman Outstanding Defensive Player Award. Ceballos along with outfielder Mason Auer and catcher Chase Adkinson were named to the all-tournament team.

About San Jacinto College

Surrounded by monuments of history, evolving industries, maritime enterprises of today, and the space age of tomorrow, San Jacinto College has served

the people of East Harris County, Texas, since 1961. San Jacinto College is among the top 10 community colleges in the nation as designated by the Aspen Institute for Community College Excellence, and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. The College serves approximately 45,000 credit and non-credit students annually, and offers more than 200 degrees and certificates across eight major areas of study that put stu-

dents on a path to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the workforce. San Jacinto College's impact on the region totals \$1.3 billion in added income, which supports 13,044 jobs. The College is fiscally sound, holding bond ratings of AA and Aa2 by Standard & Poor's and Moody's.

For more information about San Jacinto College call 281-998-6150, visit sanjac.edu or join the conversation on Facebook and Twitter.

North Shore Rotary Installation



Outgoing president Lowell Everitt congratulates the new president Shawn Silman.

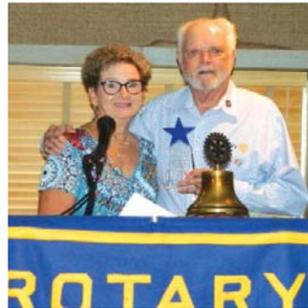


Danna Nino was named the Rotarian of the Year by the club members.

Highlands Rotary Club installs Fallin



State Representative Briscoe Cain, right, pins the President's medal on the incoming Rotary president Jerry Fallin.



Award chair Patricia Scott presents Rotarian of the Year award to outgoing president Andy Scott.



A large number of Rotarians from the club and District 5890 citywide attended the Installation banquet at the Monument Inn. At the head of the table is the new president, Shawn Silman.

North Shore Rotary,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and Mike Bilnoski, and Director of Community Service award to Matt Davis.

In honor of the deceased member and past president Bill Bowes, two scholarships known as the Bill Bowes Maritime Scholarships were awarded to Juan Montalvo and Sutton Eddins. These young men are working toward degrees in the maritime industry at the new San Jacinto Maritime College.



District 5890 Governor Scott Rainey and Rotary International Director Suzi Howe were on hand for the North Shore Rotary ceremonies.

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ASK THE EXPERT

CHARLOTTE'S WEB



Let Freedom Ring

As we have grown up in America, we have heard the phrase "Let Freedom Reign" countless times. But who defines to what extent we let it ring? I ask this question because fireworks started being sold 10 days prior to the Independence Day holiday and by Saturday night, so many in the community were upset with the noise. (For those not familiar, the North Channel Area is largely an unincorporated area of Harris County, so popping fireworks as well as making any type of noise is not regulated.)

Serving as a moderator in one of the local community groups on social media, I posted something of a gentle reminder. I mentioned that while everyone enjoys a celebration, we should all remember that many of the neighbors try to go to bed by 9 p.m., or at least get their young children in bed by 9 p.m. I mentioned that many of our neighbors are Seniors and out of respect for their sleep patterns as well as safety concerns, perhaps 9 p.m. would be a time to turn down the noise. If any of you are in local neighborhood groups, I am sure you have seen posts from concerned neighbors about the late night drag racing as well as street racing that is going on.

We all know that streets are not as wide as they once were and not a week goes by that we do not hear about someone driving off the road, or crashing into a parked car on the side of the road. Neighbors are tired of waking up to the sounds of crashing cars and certainly do not want to listen to fireworks all night. I even mentioned how fireworks cause issues with animals and to not forget about the neighbors who live with PTSD.

Almost as soon as I posted my comment, the attacks came. There were people who said they lived in the unincorporated area as they wanted to be able to do whatever they wanted. There were some who started making ugly comments about the older generation had their opportunity to party, so they should just shut up and let the younger people do as they please. There were some very rude comments about the animals and gee, I toughed a nerve about the street racing.

I am not wanting to argue with anyone, I am wanting to find a middle ground we can agree on. Yes, we live in a county with many freedoms. Yet our freedom often ends where the neighbor's freedom begins. And in days gone by, we could gather, discuss and come up with a solution. Yet today, everyone seems to want to just argue and keep doing things their own way.

When you point out laws that others are breaking, you become the bad guy. In the past, I mentioned that Texas has a "Cottage Law" pertaining to which foods you cannot cook at home and sell on the side of the road or in a parking lot. I have mentioned that we have sales tax laws and there are health permits required for many foods. I have also tried to make people aware that in Texas, only a registered non-profit can legally hold a raffle and the Secretary of State's webpage is very specific as to what all has to be printed on the ticket.

As you can imagine, as I mentioned these things, I was called Grumpy Gretchen as well as the nosy old neighbor. In reality, I was trying to keep neighbors informed as to what the requirements are to effectively do things. We have freedoms, yet there are limits. Too many people do not want to hear that last part of the sentence. We really need to work together to ensure we keep our freedoms.

San Jac Softball,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"These girls put everything they had into this season, facing some talented teams, to finish as one of the top three at the national tournament. I appreciate their dedication and work ethic throughout the entire season, and applaud them on a job well done."

San Jac, seeded eighth in the national tournament, defeated ninth seed Chattanooga State 1-0 to kick off the tournament. They then knocked off the top-ranked team, Salt Lake Community

College 6-2 to advance against Grayson College, defeating the Vikings 2-1. San Jac then fell 10-2 to Florida Southwestern State and 5-4 to Grayson to end their national title run. Florida Southwestern went on to win the national title.

Sophomore Audrey Garcia was named to the all-tournament team. In San Jac's five games she hit .438 behind 7 hits in 16 plate appearances. She had two doubles, scored four runs, and posted 2 RBI.

GLO sends \$1.1b to Harris County,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

\$750,000,000, plus \$117,213,862.96 in MIT awards for Harris County projects, plus the \$61,884,000 direct allocation of CDBG-MIT to the City of Houston, plus \$209,221,800 in infrastructure funds from CDBG-DR, equals \$1,138,319,662.96 in total investment in projects within Harris County.

In May, Commissioner Bush directed the GLO to request approval from HUD for Harris County to receive a direct allocation of \$750 million for mitigation efforts. In a written response (see below), HUD denied the GLO's request. HUD also reaffirmed their position that mitigation funding is administered fundamentally different from traditional disaster recovery funding.

HUD's spokesperson Mike Burns previously stated that, while HUD approved the state's distribution plan, Texas was responsible for creating the allocation formula and has "full responsibility and jurisdiction over who gets the money that was allocated to the state for flood mitigation." However, in their written response, HUD stated,

"Unlike CDBG-DR allocations, which are allocated based on a long-established damage-based formula," CDBG-MIT funds were made available by Public Law 115-123, which regulates the dispersal of these funds. HUD is solely responsible for the contents of the Federal Register notice and can make changes to it in accordance with public laws passed by Congress.

HUD also noted the state may propose a "Substantial Amendment to make a sub-award to Harris County with a portion of the State's CDBG-MIT funds and to provide the county with access to those funds through a sub-recipient agreement," noting the GLO must do so in adherence "with the requirements of the Federal Register notices governing CDBG-MIT funds." The GLO is already drafting an action plan to subaward \$750 million for Harris County while adding at least \$500 million to the Regional Mitigation Program, which will include at least \$418 million for the regional council of governments that includes Harris County.

ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: "What is the birthstone for July?"



JULY'S BIRTHSTONE IS RUBY

There's no better way to demonstrate your love than by giving a ruby in celebration of a July birthday. Rubies arouse the senses, stir the imagination, and are said to guarantee health, wisdom, wealth and success in love. Fine-quality ruby is extremely rare, and the color of the gem is most important to its value. The most prized color is a medium or medium-dark vivid red or slightly purplish red. If the gem is too light or has too much purple or orange, it will be called a fancy-color sapphire.



A ruby is a pink to blood-red colored gemstone, a variety of the mineral corundum (aluminium oxide). The red color is caused mainly by the presence of the element chromium. Its name comes from ruber, Latin for red. Other varieties of gem-quality corundum are called sapphires. Ruby is considered one of the four precious stones, together with sapphire, emerald and diamond.

Prices of rubies are primarily determined by color. The brightest and most valuable "red" called blood-red or "pigeon blood", commands a large premium over other rubies of similar quality. After color follows clarity: similar to diamonds, a clear stone will command a premium, but a ruby without any needle-like rutile inclusions may indicate that the stone has been treated. Cut and carat (weight) are also an important factor in determining the price. The world's most expensive ruby is the Sunrise Ruby. Rubies have a hardness of 9.0 on the Mohs scale of mineral hardness. Among the natural gems only moissanite and diamond are harder, with diamond having a Mohs hardness of 10.0 and moissanite falling somewhere in between corundum (ruby) and diamond in hardness.

All natural rubies have imperfections in them, including color impurities and inclusions of rutile needles known as "silk". Gemologists use these needle inclusions found in natural rubies to distinguish them from synthetics, simulants, or substitutes. Usually the rough stone is heated before cutting. Almost all rubies today are treated in some form, with heat treatment being the most common practice. However, rubies that are completely untreated but still of excellent quality command a large premium.

Some rubies show a three-point or six-point asterism or "star". These rubies are cut into cabochons to display the effect properly. Asterisms are best visible with a single-light source, and move across the stone as the light moves or the stone is rotated. Such effects occur when light is reflected off the "silk" (the structurally oriented rutile needle inclusions) in a certain way.

Diamond Jim is a master jeweler, diamond dealer and precious metals broker of NTR Metals. Pineforest Jewelry has been a proud member of the IJO for many years. See more at: www.pineforestjewelry.com.

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

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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★ OPINION PAGE ★

COUNTY NEWS
Harris County Judge
Lina Hidalgo



Commitment to Houston Food Bank to Fight Food Insecurity

Harris County Commissioner's Court has approved extending a contract with the Houston Food Bank to provide county workers and funding to purchase and distribute food for Harris County families in need. The contract was originally meant to last until July and will now be extended until September and provide an additional \$2.6 million in funding. Funds provided are reimbursable by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). From March 2020 to March of 2021 the Houston Food Bank has provided food to an average of 131,683 households each week which is an increase of 85% from the year prior.

Tracking Catalytic Converter Serial Numbers to Prevent Thefts

Harris County will be tracking essential pieces of your car that have become a target for thieves during the past year. Local catalytic converter thefts are up more than 400 percent and have mainly targeted Toyota Sequoias, Tundras, and Priuses because these vehicles have two catalytic converters. Catalytic converters contain precious metals, including platinum and rhodium, and local thieves have been able to get between \$50 and \$875 for converters and converter parts at recycling centers. Last month, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo and the Commissioner's Court took action to stop this crime wave in our region by passing new regulations requiring metal recyclers to verify the origin of the converter and upload serial numbers to a law enforcement database, making it much more difficult for thieves to profit from their thefts by selling the stolen converters to metal recyclers in the unincorporated areas of Harris County.

Harris County Honors George Floyd Day on June 9th

As a nation, we have collectively grieved for the loss of George Floyd and were outraged at the injustices committed against him. Though nothing can change the tragic circumstances of his murder, Harris County Commissioners Court last month passed a resolution supporting his posthumous pardon for a 2004 drug conviction concerning the alleged sale of \$10 of crack cocaine. The primary evidence in the conviction of this drug case solely relied on singular testimony by former Houston Police Detective Gerald Goines. The Harris County District Attorney's Office has since reviewed and dropped hundreds of cases linked to former officer Goines' involvement and testimonies, and court investigation of cases involving former officer Goines' testimony have already resulted in vacated convictions. Due to his death, Floyd is unable to advocate for himself in this case and file a post-conviction writ of habeas corpus issuing a false evidence claim, and, therefore, the Harris Public Defender's Office submitted an application for a full pardon on behalf of Mr. Floyd and his family. The County District Attorney agrees that these circumstances warrant a posthumous pardon. We will continue to fight for justice and fair treatment by our legal system for every Harris County resident.

This month in Harris County we honor the memory of Mr. Floyd and the movement against racial discrimination and police brutality sparked by his tragic death. Last year, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo declared June 9th George Floyd Day. The date marks the one year anniversary of Mr. Floyd's memorial service.

Resolution in Support of Transgender Youth

Despite pressing concerns like Texas' faltering energy grid and a global pandemic,

Texas lawmakers have recently focused their efforts on limiting the rights of transgender children. More than two dozen discriminatory bills were considered in the Texas Legislature this past session targeting young transgender people, part of a wave of anti-transgender bills across the country. Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo last month presented Commissioners Court with a resolution opposing any such anti-trans bills, and will continue to support inclusivity for all people in Harris County.

Resolution to Urge Medicaid Expansion in Texas

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo and Commissioner's Court last month approved a resolution encouraging the State of Texas to expand access to Medicaid to individuals who don't qualify for either Medicaid or Obamacare. While Obamacare expanded access to Medicaid for people who have incomes above their state's eligibility threshold but still below the poverty line, the Supreme Court ruled that states could choose to not expand Medicaid. Medicaid eligibility for adults in states that did not expand their programs is very limited—the median income threshold for parents in these states is the equivalent of an annual income of \$8,905 for a family of three in 2020. Nearly all childless adults remain ineligible. About 1.4 million more Texans would become eligible for Medicaid coverage if the state were to expand its program, and about 75% of them would be people of color, according to a recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation. Almost 20% of Texans lack health insurance.



THE POSTSCRIPT
By
Carrie Classon

Good Memories

My husband, Peter, is looking around our empty living room.

"I'll always have good memories of this place."

"I will too," I assure him.

We are packing up the last of our possessions and heading across the country in a few days. We won't be coming back.

This is the home Peter bought as a single person, when he retired a bit early. He wasn't sure how much he could afford, but he bought this condo in the town where his sister, Lori, lived, sight unseen.

Lori drove by the house and sent him a text. "Buy it!" she told him. Lori was his bossy older sister, and so he did. He never regretted it.

But now Lori is gone, and we have decided to move closer to my parents and Peter's family. All our furniture has been sent ahead of us, and we have been more or less camping in our home. It has not been as hard as I feared, sleeping on a futon and eating off a few leftover plates, as Peter painstakingly prepares the house for sale. Peter ran a summer camp as a young man, and this home is like his campsite; he wants to leave it better than he found it.

And Peter is sad. He has not even seen our new place yet, so he is moving into a foggy, unknown future, and I know that is hard for him. I took some pictures when I was there, with our furniture in place. I told him how quiet it was, how there were church bells ringing in every direction, how friendly everyone was, and how nice the grocery store was. Peter believes me, but it's not quite real. This place is real, and so is his sadness in leaving.

Change brings a combination of sadness and excitement. Peter and I are both a little sad but both—in our way—looking forward to the move.

"I will enjoy it once I get there," Peter assures me. He knows himself, and he knows what he likes. Most of all, he knows we enjoy our life together and we will be together.

And, while I am excited, I wonder how many more new homes, if any, I will have in my life.

I was there when my grandmother moved into her final home. She was 99, and her health had finally begun to slip. She moved into a place that, while it was not called a nursing home, certainly was. There was a bed and a dresser, a handful of personal items, a couple of chairs for visitors, and little else in her room. She had to know (as we all did) that this was the last place she would live.

I felt the sadness and the finality of it, but that feeling did not have long to settle because, as my grandmother was wheeled into the room, she looked out the window at a brilliant red maple tree.

"Oh!" my grandmother said, "Would you look at that tree!"

Our eyes left the drab little room, and we looked out at the tree, caught in the afternoon light, a brilliant blaze of red outside her window.

I think that is how she got to be 100 years old.

My grandma always looked for the good in change, even at the end, even when the change could not be a harbinger of anything but the end. Because even at the end, there was a brilliant red maple tree to look forward to. There was something beautiful. There were still good memories to be made.

Till next time,
Carrie
Carrie Classon's memoir is called "Blue Yarn." Learn more at CarrieClasson.com.

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Gary Borders



Democrats sue over defunding of legislative branch

House Democrats filed a petition with the Texas Supreme Court on Friday, seeking to overturn Gov. Greg Abbott's veto of funding for the legislative branch.

As the Austin American-Statesman and other media outlets reported, House Democrats were joined by the AFL-CIO and caucuses representing Black and Latino lawmakers in asking the court to determine the governor's actions were unconstitutional.

Abbott used his line-item veto power to abolish funding for the legislative branch in the next biennial budget, which takes effect Sept. 1. He was angered by the last-minute walkout of House Democrats to stop consideration of various voting law changes pushed by the governor and Republican legislators.

"Abbott's veto is an abuse of power, an act of legislative coercion and a threat to democracy, the result of which is clear and immediate harm to the people of Texas," said Chris Turner, D-Grand Prairie, chair of the Texas House Democratic Caucus. "The Legislature is a co-equal branch of government and the separation of powers is enshrined in our state constitution," Turner said. "The governor doesn't get to simply cancel another branch of government when he doesn't get his way."

Abbott's veto struck \$410.2 million allocated for the Legislature and numerous agencies that provide support to lawmakers.

Besides state lawmakers, who make \$600 a month, Turner said the veto could affect up to 2,000 employees of the Texas Senate and House and those agencies.

SPECIAL SESSION SET FOR JULY 8

Abbott has called for a



special session beginning July 8, his office announced last week. He said in a press release that the items to be addressed "will be announced prior to the convening of the special session."

Abbott had said previously that he would ask legislators to work on two priority election bills that died when the Democrats walked out, as well as a bail bill that also failed.

On Friday, Abbott urged county judges across Texas to submit their two-year projected budget for expenses related to what he terms the "ongoing border crisis." The projections, submitted online, will be used by the state to request additional border security funding during the upcoming special session.

On Friday, the governor also urged jailers statewide to assist border sheriffs with operating detention facilities and providing jail beds for people arrested on state charges related to crossing the border illegally.

PUC OUTLINES DISCONNECTION PROCEDURES AS MORATORIUM ENDS

The Texas Public Utility Commission met Thursday with its newest member, Lori Cobos, being sworn in by Chairman Peter Lake.

As previously reported, the PUC has ended the moratorium on disconnections in effect since February. The first day for potential disconnections is June 29. Customers have specific rights under PUC rules when it comes to potential disconnections for nonpayment.

The PUC publishes a "Know Your Rights" page on its website, which can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/6byxdy97>.

The PUC also said the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, which it oversees, will have to release information about power outages more quickly.

Right now, the state's main power grid operation has 60 days to release information about power plant outages, such as occurred recently during a June heat wave. That has been reduced to three days.

However, as the Texas Tribune reported, ERCOT could include which power plants were down and for how long, but not much more detail about why the outage occurred.

NUMBER OF VACCINATED TEXANS EDGES UPWARD

The number of Texans fully vaccinated has reached 11.7 million or 40 percent of the state's total population, according to Texas Health and Human Services.

Meanwhile, hospitalizations in the past week of lab-confirmed COVID-19 patients in Texas stayed roughly the same as the previous week at 1,481. New cases of COVID-19 in the state in the past week totaled 8,825 with 167 deaths recorded, little changed from the previous week.

SUPREME COURT: ACADEMY CAN'T BE SUED OVER SHOOTINGS

The Texas Supreme Court threw out four lawsuits filed against Academy Sports and Outdoors by survivors and family of the victims of the mass shooting at a Sutherland Springs church in 2017.

The Austin American-Statesman reported the court ruled Friday that the suits were prohibited by a federal law protecting retailers from legal action stemming from crimes committed by third parties.

The shooting, at a church in a small community about 30 miles east of San Antonio, left 26 people dead. The gunman was killed after leaving the scene.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com.

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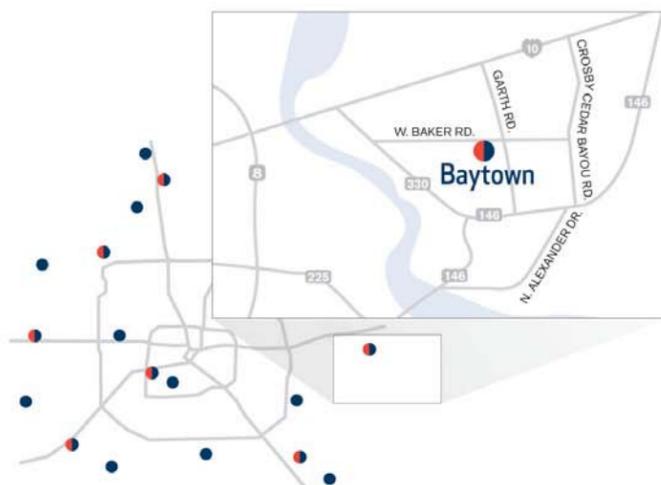
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