



Legislative Report, Page 7

# NORTH CHANNEL ★ STAR

Your News, Your Newspaper

Serving all of the North Shore -- Channelview, Cloverleaf, Sheldon, Galena Park, Jacinto City  
VOLUME 11, NO. 24 (#474) THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2023 www.northchannelstar.com

## CHANNEL CURRENTS

### C.H.I.C. monthly meeting June 22

C.H.I.C. will hold their monthly meeting Thursday, June 22 at 6:30pm at the Channelview Fire Dept. Station 3, 1210 Dell Dale. Social Hour 5:30-6:20. June's program will be a presentation by the Channelview Fire Dept. about its history, service to the community, and equipment. Everyone welcome.

### Hot. Hot. Hot.

With temperatures reaching over 100 degrees this week, you might want to check out our newest advertiser, American Residential, on Page 6. They offer a tune-up on your A/C system for \$49, or a new system at a \$2000 discount. 855-241-1293.

# Community leaders concerned about toxic sediment in proposed Ship Channel landfills

## Public meeting with EPA and Corps on June 22nd

HOUSTON — Concerned with the health and environmental risks connected to Port Houston's \$1 billion expansion of the Houston Ship Channel, known as Project 11, Healthy Port Communities Coalition representatives and legal and scientific experts will gather for a day of meetings, presentations and tours with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Port, and the Environmental Protection Agency's Region 6 on **Thursday, June 22, 2023.**

Media availability starts at **4 p.m. in Pleas-**

**antville at the Judson Robinson, Sr. Community Center at 1422 Ledwicke Street, 77029,** following a schedule of presentations by community members from Channelview and Pasadena; discussion of the results of third-party soil testing by Environmental Defense Fund, Lone Star Legal Aid and Public Citizen; and a tour through Galena Park, Clinton Park and Pleasantville to sites the Army Corps is considering for the deposit of the dredge spoils from the project. (To see an interactive map of the sites, see website.)

### Among those expected to be available to comment: EPA Region 6

\*Dr. Earthea Nance, Regional Administrator  
\*Iris Gonzalez, Chief of Staff  
\*Charles Maguire, Water Division Director  
\*Robert Houston, NEPA Division  
\*Gerardo Acosta, EJ Division  
**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**  
\*Col. Rhett Blackmon  
\*Byron Williams  
\*Rob Thomas  
\*Brian Harper  
\*Chris Frabotta  
\*Carlos Tate

### \*Eric Schourek

### Port of Houston

\*Roger Guenther – Executive Director  
\*Charlie Jenkins – Chief Channel Infrastructure Officer  
\*Lori Brownell – Director, Channel Improvement  
\*Maria Aguirre – Director, Community Relations  
**City of Houston**  
\*Mayor Sylvester Turner (invited)  
**Harris County Attorney's Office**  
\*Christian Menefee (invited)  
The Healthy Port Communities Coalition (HPCC) is a coalition of nonprofit,

community-driven organizations that work to create a healthier Houston by empowering residents to recognize local issues and advocate for their communities. Coalition members include Achieving Community Tasks Successfully, Air Alliance Houston, Bayou City Waterkeeper, Coalition of Community Organizations, East Harris County Empowerment Council, Environmental Community Advocates of Galena Park, Healthy Gulf, Public Citizen and THEA-Texas Health and Environment Alliance.

# GP/Ace Hardware & Houston ToolBank donate student desks

BY ALLAN JAMAIL

Galena Park, TX. – On June, 10, 2023, Kiran Bardal, The Galena Park Ace Hardware Owner, and Marly Maskill, Executive Director of Houston ToolBank co-sponsored a free student desk-give-away event.

Kiran Bardal, Owner recently told NC Star writer Allan Jamail, "Galena Park Ace Hardware has been faithfully serving the Galena Park / Jacinto City community's since we opened our door during the peak of the deadly Covid pandemic virus in April 2020."

"In a span of three years we have always been there for the communities through one disaster after another. The Hurricane threats, the freeze of February 2021 and December 2022 all while being the go-

to place to get life-saving pandemic related essential supplies." "Our dedicated team worked through the power outage during the deadly freeze of 2022 using flashlights in their hands in order to help suffering customers in need of our materials and supplies."

"We feel proud of the value we've added to the surrounding communities needs and plan to remain an essential part of the lives of our customers for years to come," Bardal said.

Marly Maskill, Executive Director, of The Houston ToolBank (HTB) said, "We're grateful for the opportunity given us to partner with Galena Park Ace Hardware to build free desks for students in the Galena Park ISD area. We were blown away by all of the community members who came out to volunteer



L - R: Marly Maskill, Executive Director, Houston ToolBank & Kiran Bardal, Owner, Galena Park Ace Hardware holding a recently made student desk. (Photo by Allan Jamail)

in support this initiative, and we look forward to doing more projects in Galena Park/Jacinto City area."

The HTB serves community-based organizations by providing tools, equipment, and expertise to empower their most ambitious goals. Some 11,000 projects have been completed. Such as community development projects—including painting schools, helping veterans, building wheelchair ramps and playgrounds, and landscaping public areas.

The HTB has shown that when they put high-quality tools in the hands of volunteers, their members are able to do more for their communities – whether through home repair, days of service, or charitable events. Since operations began in 2014, the Houston ToolBank has equipped 290,000+ volunteers across 1,100+ organizations to complete 23,000+ projects.

The HTB has over 375 member agencies. The number of nonprofits supported has expanded every year as more and more charities, commu-

CONTINUED. SEE STUDENT DESKS, PAGE 3

# GALENA PARK'S DOG PARK County opens Early Childhood "REACH" program

BY ALLAN JAMAIL

Galena Park, TX. – June 20, 2023 the City of Galena Park is providing the residents and their pets with a dog park equipped with several nice extras you'll not find in most cities. The park is located in the 1300 block of Keene Street next to the community building.

(SEE PHOTO OF DOG PARK RULES)

Galena Park Police Chief Richard Wagner took Allan Jamail, the NC Star writer on a recent tour of the dog park. There are two separate dog park pens, one for small doggies and one for large doggy's. They each have several different activities which dog owners can train their pets on that'll provide them with healthy exercises. Also available is a dog water fountain



Galena Park Police Chief Richard Wagner with the police department's mascot named Galena. The chief's Galena has the best of a dog's life, it stays in the police station's air-conditioning and the staff is providing it with treats regularly. (Photo by Allan Jamail)

at the height the dogs can get a drink from and stay cool and hydrated. After exercising the dogs there's a special water hose with a pad for the dogs to stand on and it's equipped with a drainage line so owners can cool their pet down and given them a shampoo if desired.

God made the animals: Genesis 1:25-25.

### Applications Now Open 1,000 Spaces Available

HARRIS COUNTY - Today, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo joined nonprofits BakerRipley and United Way of Greater Houston to announce that Harris County families can now apply for the Early REACH child care program. The Early REACH (Raising Educational Access for Children in Harris County) program will create up to 1,000 child care spaces for children ages zero to four. Judge Hidalgo has made early childhood programs one of her marquee priorities since taking office, and the Early REACH program is possible thanks to \$26 million in American Rescue Plan funds.

"Our program is a game-changer for the community. Harris County residents must be able to afford to live, work and raise a family here, and we are addressing the urgent need for child care," said Judge Hidalgo. "A thou-



Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo announces new REACH Early Childhood program, with BakerRipley and United Way.

sand more young kids are going to get high quality care which we know leads to lifelong outcomes like higher income, higher likelihood of graduation, and lower risk of justice involvement."

The Early REACH program will be implemented by BakerRipley and United Way of Greater Houston. United Way will recruit child care centers while working with them to improve the quality of care. BakerRipley will be responsible for contracting with child care centers, paying them, and recruiting and enrolling families and children.

"Quality early childhood education begins with empowering teachers and childcare directors to provide the very best education and care to the children they serve," said Amanda McMillian, President and CEO, United Way of Greater Houston. "Investing in child care centers through programs like Early REACH helps build environments where teachers have the support, training, and information to help them develop as professionals, work through challenges, and

CONTINUED. SEE REACH EARLY CHILDHOOD, PAGE 5



## SHELDON ISD NEWS

### Sheldon Summer Scramble Sizzles with Record Turnout



Sheldon ISD’s Education Foundation held its third annual Sheldon Summer Scramble at the Clubs of Kingwood on June 16 with record participation. Approximately 125 golfed in the event raising a gross total of approximately \$75,000. Proceeds from the tournament will

fund innovative teaching grants submitted by Sheldon ISD educators. This year’s tournament was presented by Huckabee. “We are extremely appreciative of the support of our donors and sponsors in this year’s tournament,” said Director of Communica-

tions and Community Partnerships Emily Conklin, APR. “Every dollar raised will go back into our classroom to make a difference for our students and teachers.” To get involved with Sheldon ISD’s Education Foundation, please go to [www.sheldonisd.com/sef](http://www.sheldonisd.com/sef).

### Sheldon ISD Communication Department wins 7 National Awards

Sheldon ISD has received seven national communications awards from thousands of entries across the nation. The Golden Achievement Award recognizes exemplary work in all aspects of school public relations, communication, marketing and engagement. Each entry is judged individually against the contest criteria - not against other entries - and judges select as many winners as meet the award criteria. Sheldon ISD’s communication team earned a Golden Achievement Award for the communication plan for the 2022 bond election.

The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA’s) Publications and Digital Media Excellence Awards recognize outstanding education publications and marketing/informational materials (print and electronic), video/TV/radio programs, social media and websites. Sheldon’s communication team received the following awards:

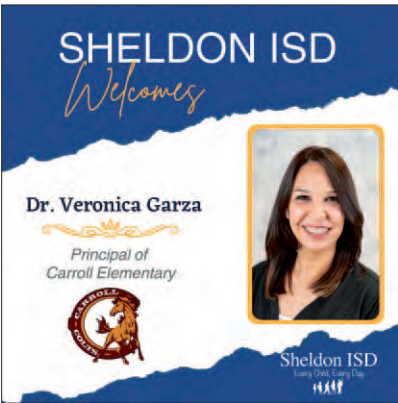
- Award of Excellence - 2022 Annual Report
  - Award of Excellence - Electronic Newsletter The Scoop
  - Honorable Mention-Branding/Image Package
  - Honorable Mention - Sheldon ISD website
  - Honorable Mention - Safety infographic
  - Honorable Mention - Electronic Newsletter The Source
- The team will receive recognition at the national conference in July for their work.
- Dr. Veronica Garza named principal of Carroll Elementary School**

Sheldon ISD is pleased to announce Dr. Veronica Garza as the principal of Carroll Elementary School. Dr. Garza brings approximately 20 years of educational experience including six years as an administrator. Most recently she was the assistant principal for Cimarron Elementary in Galena Park ISD.

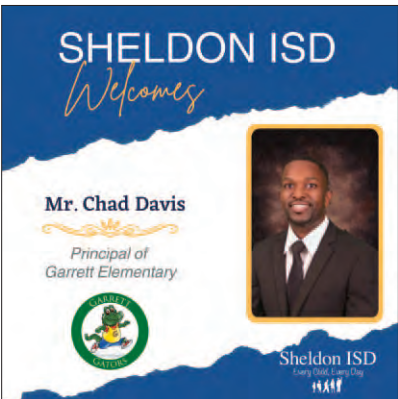
“We are excited that Dr. Garza is bringing her talents to Sheldon ISD,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Demetrius McCall. “She brings a wealth of knowledge in elementary instruction, and I have complete confidence that she will be successful in this school community.”

Dr. Garza has spent 20 years in Galena Park ISD where she was named the 2020 Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year for GPISD. Her experience ranges from second, third and fourth grade teacher to campus instructional coach to lead teacher and assistant principal. She has a doctorate in educational leadership and specialization in superintendency from University of Houston - Clear Lake, a master’s degree in educational administration from Lamar University and a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Texas A&M University.

“I am eager to begin serving the Carroll Elementary and Sheldon ISD community,” said Dr. Garza. “In partnership with our families and staff, I look forward to continuing the success that the school has already achieved as we set our sights on what’s best for students.”



“I look forward to the continued success this campus will see under his leadership.”



Mr. Davis will begin his role as principal this summer. Families will see information soon regarding a meet and greet for their new principal.

### Pre-kindergarten registration now available

Sheldon ISD is now accepting enrollment for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students for the 2023-24 school year. Sheldon ISD’s mission to provide a personalized learning experience to equip students with the skills needed to be suc-

cessful in college and/or a career begins as early as pre-kindergarten. Skills like literacy development are critical to begin at an early age. Sheldon offers full-day pre-kindergarten for children four years of age at two early childhood facilities. The district pro-

vides a curriculum, Fueling Brians, that focuses on the whole child, with classrooms that focus on developing the left and right brain executive functions. To register, please go to [www.sheldonisd.com/register](http://www.sheldonisd.com/register).

### STEM Welcomes Incoming Freshman to Program

Approximately 107 students attended C. E. King High School for a four-day Summer Bridge Camp for rising ninth graders. STEM freshmen are working hard learning the STEM culture, setting goals for high school and college and preparing for the Texas Success Initiative Assessment 2.0 (TSIA2) college entrance exam. The STEM Class of 2027 is off to a great start and the STEM Staff is “All In”.



## CHANNELVIEW ISD NEWS

### The CISD SUMMER Meals Program

With the Summer Meals Programs, all children and teens ages 18 and under, can continue to eat healthy throughout the summer at no cost, just by showing up at a participating meal site. \*

**Locations & serving times:**

<b>Channelview High School</b> June 5th - 29th, Monday - Thursday	Breakfast 7:30 am-8:00 am Lunch 11:15 am-12:30 pm
<b>McGhee Elementary</b> June 5th - 29th, Monday - Thursday	Breakfast 7:45 am-8:15 am Lunch 10:40 am-12:30 pm
<b>Barrett-Lee ECC</b> June 5th - 29th, Monday - Thursday	Breakfast:7:30 am-8:00 am Lunch 11:15 am-12:30 pm
<b>Hamblen Elementary</b> July 17th - 27th Monday - Thursday	Breakfast: 7:45 am-8:15 am Lunch: 11:00 am-12:30 pm

\*MEALS MUST BE CONSUMED ON SITE

### Summer Camp Opportunity for CISD Students

Career & Technical Education has another Summer Camp opportunity for our CISD students. In partnership with EHCEC and Best Buy, we are hosting a 2-day Geek Squad Academy for incoming 5th - 12th graders to be held 6/28-29 at Channelview High School. Please check out the flyer for more info.

### Geek Squad Academy

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28 - THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 2023**

Geek Squad Academy from Best Buy is a two-day hands on opportunity for **students** to develop tech skills, build self-confidence, spark creativity, and discover how technology can benefit them in their educational pursuits and in future careers. Students will learn coding, game design, photography, 3D design, digital music and more!

In partnership with Channelview ISD CTE.

**8:30 AM - 3:30 PM**  
Free Event - Registration Required  
Breakfast & lunch will be provided.

For registration & more information please visit:  
<https://rb.gy/ay62b>

Must be a current Channelview ISD student in grades 5-12 to attend



CHARLOTTE'S WEB

By Charlotte Jackson



Letting go

How do people learn to let go? I was with a small group on Sunday and the question was asked. Someone asked if we were talking about the pain of divorce and another asked if we were talking about childhood trauma. Another group member chimed in and asked how are you supposed to let go of the irritations from neighbors who hold loud parties several times a month. Another asked if anyone had an answer for letting go of the frustration that happens in the workplace.

As I age, I find that there are many people who have stuffed so many things into their heart that they cannot live a happy life. I have known people who were upset as their parents divorced when they were young and while they were raised in a single parent home, the other parents remarried and started a second family. I have known those who had a sibling placed for adoption and once reunited with the birth family, if the one adopted asked any questions, the other family members were upset.

You may also know of someone who works diligently to not only do their job but goes the extra mile to make a difference. Unfortunately, they have a coworker who wants to take all the credit, even if they have no clue how to do the basic job, much less put in anything extra.

The best answer our group could come up with was that in due season the truth comes out. One man reminded the group that we are not supposed to complain but instead thank God for every trial we endure. We all agreed that that is hard to do. And it is even harder to explain to our children or younger people in our lives. Someone mentioned that we must impart the knowledge early that life is not fair and there will be days that are filled with frustration, but we also need to let them know that no matter what, we must learn to forgive and forget. If we do not, we are the ones that suffer. One lady mentioned a story about drinking poison and expecting someone else to die.

As the group prepared to leave, one wise person suggested that learning to let go is something that happens much easier if we do two things. The first is to pray for the offended as well as for yourself. The second was to have an accountability partner that could point you back to the road less traveled on the days that circumstances get the best of you. Another friend reminded us to go easy on ourselves. Most of us had already expressed that we are often our own worst enemy. We need to practice kindness and toss it around like confetti.

REACH Early Childhood,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

implement best practices that contribute to strong outcomes for kids.”

“I commend Harris County for continuing to recognize that high-quality child care is a vital component for the growth of the economy, workforce development, and socioeconomic mobility. For many low-income families that work hard but still struggle with rapidly rising costs of living, Early REACH will be a big positive step toward financial stability and self-sufficiency,” said Claudia Aguirre, BakerRipley President and CEO.

Children and families are eligible to participate if they meet these requirements:

- Residency: Live in Harris County AND
  - Age: Children are age zero to four AND
  - Demonstrate financial need via one of the following:
    - Live in a family that makes 85% less of State Median Income (SMI) (approx. \$75,468 annually for a family of four.) OR
    - Live in an area of high need according to the Social Vulnerability Index (high need considered to be .75 or above) OR
    - Are experiencing homelessness OR
    - Are in foster care OR
    - Receive WIC, SNAP, TANF, free or reduced lunch, or SSI income.
- To learn more about Early REACH, and apply, visit [www.earlyreach.org](http://www.earlyreach.org).

Dealing with the loss of a loved one is never easy, but maybe these guys can help!

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Free Student Desks,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

nity groups and first responders join for free.

To become a member or to see if they can help your organization and or answer your questions call 713-674-0262. They strictly work by appointments only.

To learn more about the HTB or how you can become a HTB partner visit: [www.houstontoolbank.org](http://www.houstontoolbank.org).

The Galena Park Ace Hardware is located at 1401 Holland Ave, Galena Park, TX 77547, phone: 832-740-4940. For hours, directions and materials and supplies visit: [www.acehardware.com/store-details/17571](http://www.acehardware.com/store-details/17571)

FRIDAY MOVIE NIGHT CASINO FUNDRAISER



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ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: “What is the Birthstone for the Month of June?”

JUNE BIRTHSTONES

June counts three gems as birthstones: pearl, Alexandrite, and moonstone.

**Pearl**

Pearls are unique as they are the only gems from living sea creatures and require no faceting or polishing to reveal their natural beauty. In the early 1900s, the first successful commercial culturing of round saltwater pearls began. Since the 1920s, cultured pearls have almost completely replaced natural pearls in the market.

The qualities that determine the overall value of a natural or cultured pearl or a piece of pearl jewelry are size, shape, color, luster, surface quality, nacre quality, and, for jewelry with two or more pearls, matching. When other value factors are equal, larger pearls are rarer and more valuable than smaller pearls of the same type. Round is the most difficult shape to culture, making it the rarest cultured pearl shape and—if all other factors are equal—also generally the most valuable. There are exceptions, though. Well-formed pear, oval, or baroque (irregularly shaped) cultured pearls are also prized by pearl lovers.

Natural and cultured pearls occur in a broad range of hues. There are warm hues like yellow, orange, and pink, and cool hues like blue, green, and violet. Pearls have a wide range of tone from light to dark. Pearl colors tend to be muted, with a soft, subtle quality.

**Alexandrite**

A relatively modern gem, Alexandrite, was first discovered in Russia in 1831 during the reign of its namesake, Czar Alexander II, and is an extremely rare chrysoberyl with chameleon-like qualities. Its color is a lovely green in both daylight and fluorescent light; it changes color to a purplish red in incandescent light.

Due to its rarity, some jewelers stock lab grown versions of this enchanting gemstone. (lab grown gemstones are man-made alternatives to the natural mined stones, possessing the same physical, optical, and chemical properties as the natural gemstone.) Alexandrite is also the gem for the 55th wedding anniversary.

**Moonstone**

The third birthstone for June is the moonstone. It was given its name by the Roman natural historian Pliny, who wrote that moonstone’s appearance altered with the phases of the moon — a belief that held until well after the sixteenth century. A phenomenal gemstone, moonstones show a floating play of light (called adularescence) and sometimes show either a multi-rayed star or a cat’s eye.

Considered a sacred stone in India, moonstones often are displayed on a background of yellow (a sacred color) and are believed to encapsulate within the stone a spirit whose purpose is to bring good fortune. Part of the family of minerals called feldspar, moonstone occurs in many igneous and metamorphic rocks and comes in a variety of colors such as green, blue, peach, and champagne. The most prized moonstones are from Sri Lanka; India, Australia...the United States, Myanmar, and Madagascar are also sources.

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

Diamond Jim is a master jeweler, diamond dealer and precious metals broker. Pineforest Jewelry has been a proud member of the Independent Jewelers Organization (IJO) and the Retail Jewelers Organization (RJO) for many years. See more at: [www.pineforestjewelry.com](http://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](mailto:jmills@pineforestjewelry.com).

Then. Now. Always.

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In North Shore, nearly everyone reads the NORTH CHANNEL STAR. Your Hometown Newspaper.



★

OPINION PAGE

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# TEXAS GLO

By Dawn Buckingham, M.D.  
Commissioner, Texas General Land Office

## Hurricane Season 2023 Begins June 1

### Don't Ignore Your Risk, Be Prepared and Stay Prepared

AUSTIN – Texas Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham, M.D., is encouraging all Texans to prepare for the 2023 hurricane season, which begins Thursday, June 1 and runs through Thursday, November 30, 2023. Commissioner Buckingham and her Texas General Land Office team are working with coastal and inland communities to encourage all Texans to purchase flood insurance and take measures to protect their families and homes.

“Because of the GLO’s disaster recovery programs, Texas is better prepared for natural disasters like hurricanes, floods, and wildfires,” Commissioner Buckingham said. “It’s important to remember that no federally funded assistance program is designed to make you whole after a disaster. It is up to you to plan properly, protect your home with wind and flood insurance, and safeguard your documents. The GLO is proud to help communities prepare and recover from natural disasters.”

The GLO encourages all Texans to prepare for hurricane season by doing the following:

- **Know Your Risk** - Sign up for your community’s emergency warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.
- **Make Your Evacuation Plan** - Check with local officials about updated evacuation shelters for this year. Know where your family will meet up if you are separated and where you will stay. Pack a “go bag” including items you need to take with you if you evacuate. A “go bag” should be easy to carry and kept in a place where you can grab it quickly. Check with [drivetexas.org](http://drivetexas.org) to find routes near you. To find a shelter near you, download the FEMA app at [fema.gov/mobile-app](http://fema.gov/mobile-app).
- **Gather Supplies** - Plan for your entire household including children, people with disabilities or access/functional needs, and pets.
- **Secure Documents** - Remember to secure copies of important personal documents. Filing for government assistance requires documentation. Be sure to keep documents in a secure location and take them with you if you need to evacuate. Place these documents in a waterproof bag and back them up on cloud storage or a thumb drive.
- **Protect Your Property** - Shutter your home as needed, review your flood insurance policy (or sign up for one), and declutter drains and gutters. Most homeowner and renter insurance policies do not cover flood damage. A flood insurance policy generally does not take effect until 30 days after purchase, so be sure to maintain your policy. Take a video “tour” of your home to document all items and the home’s current condition.

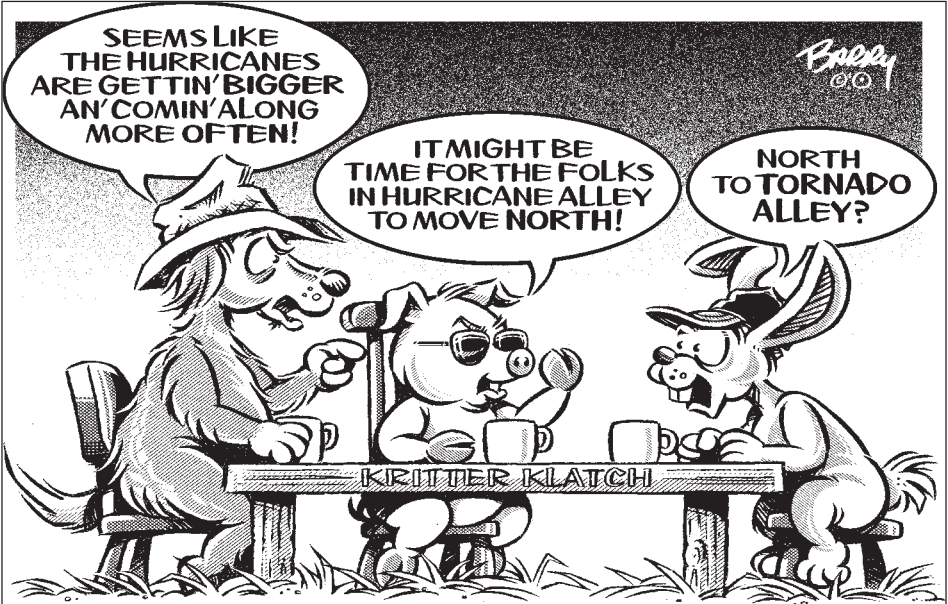
The Texas General Land Office continues to promote preparedness through “Don’t Ignore Your Risk,” a public outreach initiative to encourage Texans to be prepared and stay prepared for hurricane season. The multi-media, multi-platform public service announcement urges Texans to take time now to know their risk, purchase flood insurance, protect their home, safeguard documents, and prepare emergency supplies and an evacuation route.

# top ten

## Most Favorite U.S. States, according to Americans

1. Hawaii
2. Colorado
3. Virginia
4. Nevada
5. North Carolina
6. Florida
7. Arizona
8. New York
9. Georgia
10. Texas

Source: YouGov





# STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



## Abbott vetoes bills; Feud with Patrick grows

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick claimed last week that Gov. Greg Abbott is sabotaging the Senate’s work because of their ongoing feud over which approach to property tax reform is best, The Dallas Morning News reported. Abbott vetoed three bills by Sen. Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston, who has been Patrick’s point senator on increasing homestead exemptions in order to provide tax cuts. As of Friday afternoon, he had vetoed 31 bills.

Abbott has threatened a string of vetoes if the House and Senate can’t agree on a compromise on property tax relief. In each veto proclamation, Abbott has issued the following statement: “This bill can be reconsidered at a future special session only after property tax relief is passed.”

Patrick took issue with that. “The governor’s suggested threat today to veto a large number of Senate bills is an affront to the legislative process and the people of Texas,” he said.

### WILL THE STATE’S ELECTRIC GRID HOLD THIS SUMMER?

Much of Texas is in the throes of a sweltering heat wave, prompting concern that the electric grid will be strained as Texans try to keep cool. However, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, which operates the grid, predicts it will be able to handle forecast peaks in energy usage, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

The biggest factor is demand for air conditioning of homes and businesses, according to Robert Hebner, director of the University of Texas Center for Electromechanics.

“Any rapid change in temperature causes great difficulty. If you have a gradual change, (companies) usually adjust to it fairly well,” Hebner said. “This summer, there’s a good chance they’ve anticipated well enough that we’ll be able to get through.”

The first official day of



summer is Wednesday, June 21.

### NEW LAW BANS PAPER LICENSE PLATES

Temporary paper “dealer tags” will soon be a thing of the past after Abbott signed House Bill 718. The new law phases out the tags and requires dealers to issue \$10 metal plates to buyers purchasing vehicles, the Houston Chronicle reported.

Paper Texas tags have been criticized by law enforcement officials for years, since they are easy to fake and often used on vehicles used to commit crimes. A report by KXAN in 2021 found that selling of fake Texas tags had become a \$200 million illicit business.

The Department of Motor Vehicles has until December of next year to come up with a plan for creating and distributing metal plates to dealerships. The law itself goes into effect on July 1, 2025.

### BILL RESTRICTING LOCAL CONTROL SIGNED INTO LAW

Cities and counties will be further restricted from implementing ordinances or regulations on issues normally addressed by the state after Abbott signed House Bill 2127, the Statesman reported. According to the bill’s language, it is a means to “provide statewide consistency by returning sovereign regulatory powers to the state where those powers belong.”

Previously, regulations put into place by cities

were unenforceable if found to be in violation of a state code. An oft-cited example is an Austin ordinance passed in 2018 aimed at forcing most private employers in that city to provide sick leave. However, that ordinance never took effect since courts ruled it unconstitutional.

Opponents of HB 2127 fear it will further erode local governments’ power to handle community issues.

“We barge into bedrooms, locker rooms, boardrooms, examining rooms and now city council meetings,” Sen. Sarah Eckhardt, D-Austin, said during the debate. “We should be doing our job rather than micromanaging theirs.”

Abbott praised the bill’s passage, tweeting after the signing that he “signed a law to provide a new hope to Texas businesses struggling under burdensome local regulations.”

### MURDER RAP NOW POSSIBLE FOR FENTANYL DISTRIBUTION DEATHS

Several bills were signed into law last week to fight fentanyl overdoses by classifying those deaths as poisonings, allowing universities to use opiod reversal drug Narcan, and implementing felony charges for producing and distributing fentanyl.

“This law makes clear that any person who causes a death by unlawfully manufacturing or delivering fentanyl can be prosecuted for murder in the state of Texas,” Abbott said. Nearly 2,000 Texans died last year after taking fentanyl, sometimes unknowingly because it was mixed with other drugs.

Despite the passage of these bills, some family members of overdose victims expressed disappointment that a bill that would no longer classify fentanyl test strips as drug paraphernalia did not make it out of the Senate.

### DISTRACTED DRIVING DEATHS ON THE RISE

Distracted driving has killed more than 2,000 people in Texas since 2017, and the number of deaths attributed to it increased by 10% in 2022. Approximately one of every six crashes on Texas roadways in 2022 was attributed to distracted driving, according to the Texas Department of Transportation.

“Texting, adjusting audio or navigation systems, or scrolling on a social media site can wait until you’re safely parked,” said Marc Williams, TxDOT executive director. “We’re urging Texans to make the right choice and put the phone away.”

It has been illegal since Sept. 1, 2017, to read, write or send a text while driving in Texas. Drivers are urged to put phones away while driving, to pull entirely off the road to use a phone, and to avoid eating or drinking until parked.



# THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

## “So Much”

I heard him yelling before I saw him.

He was in front of the church. His possessions were loaded into a shopping cart, and it appeared he was trying to navigate the steep hill. And he was yelling.

Was there a fight? Should I be worried?

But when I finally saw him, he was standing alone with his shopping cart. His face was flushed, and his voice was loud. I walked until I stood on the sidewalk in front of him.

“What’s the matter?” I asked.

He stopped yelling immediately. He looked surprised—as if his yelling had been happening in a private place, and he hadn’t expected anyone to notice. His eyes were wild, and his clothes were torn. He looked as if he had lived without a home for a long time.

“He said I was an animal!”

His eyes darted off past the clump of trees that delineates the church property. I could see no one. Maybe there was someone just out of sight. Maybe there was no one. It probably doesn’t matter.

I looked back at this man. He was no longer yelling. He looked as if he might cry.

“Well, you’re not,” I said.

He looked at me in a peculiarly intense way, as if to see if I could be trusted to tell the truth. I’ve seen this look, from time to time, in homeless people. Some will not make eye contact at all. They will look down or away as if I don’t exist, or they will speak over my shoulder, never meeting my eyes. This man looked directly into my eyes and watched me closely.

“You are absolutely not an animal,” I told him firmly.

I saw his shoulders drop as if he was setting down a heavy weight. The person or phantom behind the trees seemed to be forgotten. He continued to look at me.

I didn’t know what else to say. So I patted my heart, and I told him, “And I want you to know that I care.”

I held his eyes for a moment longer and then headed off home. He might have said something after that. It sounded as if he was trying to say something, to explain something, but I knew there was nothing more I could do.

We all carry so much.

All the way home and for much of that night, I thought about that lonely man with the shopping cart and his outrage at being called an animal. He was indignant and afraid and desperate for it not to be true, and—maybe for just a moment—he was reassured it was not true because some random older woman on the sidewalk told him so. Life is so precarious sometimes.

Later that night, lying in bed, I told my husband, Peter, about the man and what I’d said.

“You are kind,” Peter told me.

I don’t know if that’s true or not, but I know for certain that strangers have helped me when I needed help, and kind words have changed my day from terrible to something better—something more hopeful. I think of the many people I can never pay back and I hope I can pay forward some of the undeserved kindness I’ve been shown over all the years of my life.

But more than anything, when I think about that lonely man, fighting off his demons, I realize I have no idea how it feels to face anything as large or as terrifying as that man faces every day.

And for that, I am terribly—selfishly—grateful.

Till next time.  
Carrie

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TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Notice of Draft Federal Operating Permit

Draft Permit No.: 01260

**Application and Draft Permit.** Southwest Shipyard, L.P., 18310 Market St, Channelview, TX 77530-3858, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for a renewal and revision of Federal Operating Permit (herein referred to as Permit) No. 01260, Application No. 34568, to authorize operation of the Southwest Shipyard, a Ship Building and Repairing facility. The area addressed by the application is located at 18310 Market St in Channelview, Harris County, Texas 77530-3858. This link to an electronic map of the site or facility's general location is provided as a public courtesy and not part of the application or notice. For exact location, refer to the application. You can find an electronic map of the facility at: <https://gisweb.tceq.texas.gov/LocationMapper/?marker=-95.065277,29.789722&level=13>. This application was received by the TCEQ on December 12, 2022.

The purpose of a federal operating permit is to improve overall compliance with the rules governing air pollution control by clearly listing all applicable requirements, as defined in Title 30 Texas Administrative Code § 122.10 (30 TAC § 122.10). The draft permit, if approved, will codify the conditions under which the area must operate. The permit will not authorize new construction. The executive director has completed the technical review of the application and has made a preliminary decision to prepare a draft permit for public comment and review. The executive director recommends issuance of this draft permit. The permit application, statement of basis, and draft permit will be available for viewing and copying at the TCEQ Central Office, 12100 Park 35 Circle, Building E, First Floor, Austin, Texas 78753; and the TCEQ Region 12 Office, 5425 Polk St, Houston, Texas 77023-1444, beginning the first day of publication of this notice. The draft permit and statement of basis are available at the TCEQ Website:

[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/tvnotice](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/tvnotice)

At the TCEQ central and regional offices, relevant supporting materials for the draft permit, as well as the New Source Review permits which have been incorporated by reference, may be reviewed and copied. Any person with difficulties obtaining these materials due to travel constraints may contact the TCEQ central office file room at (512) 239-2900.

**Public Comment/Notice and Comment Hearing.** Any person may submit written comments on the draft permit. Comments relating to the accuracy, completeness, and appropriateness of the permit conditions may result in changes to the draft permit.

**A person who may be affected by the emission of air pollutants from the permitted area may request a notice and comment hearing.** The purpose of the notice and comment hearing is to provide an additional opportunity to submit comments on the draft permit. The permit may be changed based on comments pertaining to whether the permit provides for compliance with 30 TAC Chapter 122 (examples may include that the permit does not contain all applicable requirements or the public notice procedures were not satisfied). The TCEQ may grant a notice and comment hearing on the application if a written hearing request is received within 30 days after publication of the newspaper notice. The hearing request must include the basis for the request, including a description of how the person may be affected by the emission of air pollutants from the application area. The request should also specify the conditions of the draft permit that are inappropriate or specify how the preliminary decision to issue or deny the permit is inappropriate. All reasonably ascertainable issues must be raised and all reasonably available arguments must be submitted by the end of the public comment period. If a notice and comment hearing is granted, all individuals that submitted written comments or a hearing request will receive written notice of the hearing. This notice will identify the date, time, and location for the hearing.

**Written public comments and/or requests for a notice and comment hearing should be submitted to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Office of the Chief Clerk, MC-105, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087, or electronically at [www14.tceq.texas.gov/epic/eComment/](http://www14.tceq.texas.gov/epic/eComment/) and be received within 30 days after the date of newspaper publication of this notice.** Please be aware that any contact information you provide, including your name, phone number, email address and physical address will become part of the agency's public record.

**A notice of proposed final action that includes a response to comments and identification of any changes to the draft permit will be mailed to everyone who submitted public comments, a hearing request, or requested to be on the mailing list for this application.** This mailing will also provide instructions for public petitions to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to request that the EPA object to the issuance of the proposed permit. After receiving a petition, the EPA may only object to the issuance of a permit which is not in compliance with the applicable requirements or the requirements of 30 TAC Chapter 122.

**Mailing List.** In addition to submitting public comments, a person may ask to be placed on a mailing list for this application by sending a request to the Office of the Chief Clerk at the address above. Those on the mailing list will receive copies of future public notices (if any) mailed by the Chief Clerk for this application.

**Information.** For additional information about this permit application or the permitting process, please contact the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Public Education Program, MC-108, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087 or toll free at 1-800-687-4040. Si desea información en Español, puede llamar al 1-800-687-4040.

Further information may also be obtained for Southwest Shipyard, L.P. by calling Mr. Bernard Diaz at (281) 808-3458.

Notice Issuance Date: May 30, 2023



# Revive2Thrive: Infrastructure Project Updates



This week we kicked off the new drainage improvement project in the Pine Trails subdivision! This neighborhood faced various issues like street ponding, pavement distress, sidewalk buckling, and flooding.

- The \$19.6 million improvements include:**
- \*Increase stormwater drainage out of the neighborhood
  - \*Increase the size of select drainage pipes
  - \*Replace pavement and sidewalks on streets where storm sewer is upgraded
  - \*Dead trees and tree stumps will be removed within the right of way
  - \*Minor water line adjustments when conflicting with storm sewer upgrade
  - \*Construction of detention pond at the northeast corner of subdivision east of Big Gulch

The construction of the project has been divided into 4 phases. Phases 3 and 4, on the east side of the subdivision, will be constructed first. Construction is scheduled to start in June 2023. Thank you to our dedicated partners at Harris County, Harris County Engineering Department, and Harris County Flood Control.

Next Wednesday, we will also break ground on Cedar Bayou East and West subdivision. This project includes a new detention pond for drainage and storage and approximately 25,300 linear feet of reinforced concrete storm sewers of various sizes.

And this Friday, we will mark the completion of Phase 2 of the Eastex Freeway Forest drainage improvements. This project upsized storm sewers, added storm drains, and lowered portions of neighborhood streets to reduce flooding within Eastex Freeway Forest Subdivision Sections 3 and 4.

This month in Commissioners Court, the following Precinct 2 infrastructure projects were approved:

**High Meadows Drainage Improvements:** Construction on our High Meadows and Fairgreen Subdivision Drainage Improvements is anticipated to start this August.

- The project includes:**
- \*Modifying the outfalls along the flood control drainage channel
  - \*Upsizing the storm sewer system along John F. Kennedy Boulevard between Connorvale & Charriton and along Fern Meadow from Debeney to the flood control drainage channel
  - \*4,790 linear feet of concrete piping for stormwater

This project will benefit 374 structures when completed in the 1st quarter of 2024.

**Western Homes Drainage Improvement Project:** This investment in the Aldine Area is expected to provide direct relief to nearly 600 individuals in the surrounding area.

- The project includes:
- \*A new storm sewer system underneath all roadway ditches in the neighborhood
  - \*Restoring ditch and pipe culverts along 7,400 linear feet
  - \*A detention facility on the southern end of the subdivision of 50K cubic yards



## This month, Commissioner Garcia led or voted in favor of the following items:

**Savings for Senior and Disabled Homeowners:** Commissioner Garcia made a motion, and Commissioners Court unanimously approved, to increase the homestead exemption equal to 20% of the appraised value of a home plus up to an additional \$275,000 exemption for eligible 65 and older or disabled homeowners. The exemption was previously \$250,000. This will produce average savings for qualified homeowners of about \$130 per year.

**Substance Use Disorder Outreach Program:** This agreement enables Precinct 2 to provide space at our community centers for the Harris Center substance use outreach team to conduct community engagement and connect residents to treatment options.

**Water Agreement for Affordable Housing Project in East Aldine:** Commissioners Court unanimously approved an Interlocal Agreement between Harris County and the East Aldine Management District providing wastewater capacity for the upcoming affordable housing subdivision in the East Aldine area. The Connorvale Project is an affordable single-family home development that will provide 47 newly built homes, and more than half will be affordable homes.

**Veterans Suicide Prevention:** Commissioner Garcia was proud to approve the Veterans Services Department's request for a new Peer Support Specialist position to focus on suicide prevention. With one veteran suicide every six days on average in Harris County, this position aims to reduce this as much as possible.



Commissioner Garcia presented a resolution recognizing May as Mental Health Awareness Month to highlight the critical role of the county in providing crucial behavioral health services and resources to its residents. Harris County continues its commitment to partner with our community members to ensure that mental health services are accessible, valuable, and culturally appropriate for all residents. Ms. Carrie Rys, Chief of Administration, The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, appeared in court to accept the resolution. Ms. Donna Mohlman of Baytown spoke about the value of this program, and how it helped her son.

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Crime Stoppers and the Harris County Sheriff's Office Vehicular Crimes Division need the public's assistance identifying the suspect(s) responsible for a Hit and Run – Failure to Stop and Render Aid – Fatality.

On Saturday, February 4, 2023, at approximately 5:30 a.m., the victim was struck by an unknown vehicle in the 15100 block of Woodforest Blvd. in Harris County, Texas. After the incident, the victim's body was found unresponsive in the westbound lanes of the roadway. The suspect's vehicle fled the scene without rendering aid. The victim suffered major injuries, and sadly died as a result of the collision.

Crime Stoppers may pay up to \$5,000 for information leading to the charging and/or arrest of the suspect(s) in this case. Information may be reported by calling 713-222-TIPS (8477), submitted online at [www.crime-stoppers.org](http://www.crime-stoppers.org) or through the Crime Stoppers mobile app. Only tips and calls DIRECTLY TO Crime Stoppers are anonymous and eligible for a cash reward.

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