



Tony Wood, site manager for the Channelview Complex at LyondellBasell, spoke to the NC Chamber of Commerce on the 35th anniversary of Community Advisory Panel (CAPLE). See Story on page 2

# NORTH CHANNEL ★ STAR Your News, Your Newspaper

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## MIRELES UNSEATS MOYA IN GALENA PARK MAYORAL RACE

By David Taylor / Managing Editor

GALENA PARK - Shouts and screams of "We won! We won!" could be heard up and down Clinton Drive late Saturday night as two time challenger Oscar Mireles upset incumbent Mayor Esmeralda Moya in the mayor's race by a large margin, 837 to 700.

After years of alleged secrecy, ignoring open record requests, and shortened city council meetings with little accountability, Moya lost the early vote

649 to 572, lost the Election Day votes in Precinct 081 by 62-54, and lost by double digits 106-57 in Precinct 208 on Election Day.

Mireles was unsuccessful in his first bid to unseat Moya two years ago, but he overcame some alleged shenanigans, and alleged harassment by police to carve out a satisfying win over Moya.

Mireles is bringing an end to Esmeralda Moya's tenure in office which began in June-July 2014, when she won the runoff election and was sworn



Oscar Mireles  
New Elected Galena Park Mayor



Esmeralda Moya  
Former Galena Park Mayor

into office as the city's first Hispanic female mayor and served roughly 12 years as mayor of Galena

Park. Mireles, a familiar presence in local civic matters and community efforts, se-

cured the win in a race that signals a shift in direction for the city. Residents turned out to select a candidate many see as focused on engagement and a renewed approach to city priorities.

Out of his slate of five running to fill city council, three are clear winners including Juan Flores who defeated incumbent Jorge Rodriguez, 819-683 for the Position 2 seat on council, and Martha Cantu-Perez with a tally of 742-689 for Position 3.

In Position 1, a three-

way race between Walter Mejia, Luis Pere, and Oralia Sumaya, Sumaya eeked out a close win with 679 votes, to Pere's 668, and Mejia's 146. A recount of the vote could happen.

Jose Lopez scored a narrow 759-723 win over Maui Medrano for Position 4. A recount could also be called in that election as well.

"It's been many years of hard work to get to this point, and now we have a lot of work to do to get this city back where it belongs," said a jubilant Juan Flores.

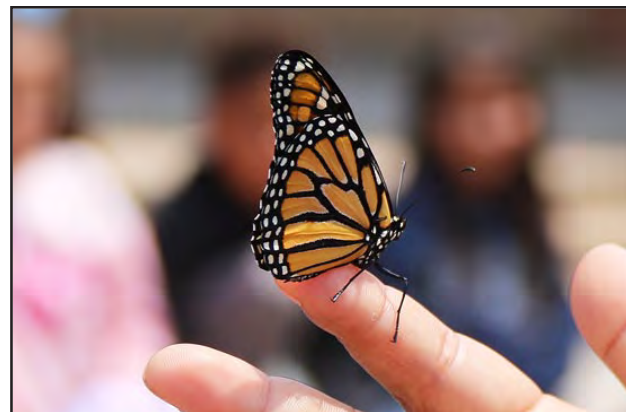
## Monarch Butterflies Take Flight from Hamblen Elementary After Successful Captive Rearing

By David Taylor  
Managing Editor

Monday was fly day for dozens of monarch butterflies who had been raised in captivity by several first-grade classes at B. H. Hamblen Elementary school in Channelview. Nurturing the eggs laid by migrating female butterflies and donated to the classes by Briscoe Cain, Sr., today was release day for the colorfully winged insects.

"The kids got to experience the whole process of the chrysalis and then get to see our butterfly females," said a proud Vanessa Lopez, first-grade teacher at Hamblen.

She guided her students' knowledge with videos, craft projects and ultimately the care of live butterflies in her classroom. "I read to them about how the monarch butterfly migrates to Florida, California, and Mexico for warm places. Together we wrote about what happens first, the egg stage, and then the



Despite the habitats being opened completely for the monarchs to fly to freedom, some stayed behind almost as if to say thank you for raising me and taking care of me.

caterpillar hatches. We watched as the caterpillar turns into the chrysalis and then the birth of the butterfly," she said purposefully.

Students were amazed to learn that butterfly's taste with sensors on their feet allowing them to detect if a leaf is safe for laying eggs or if a plant provides enough nourishment for their larvae.

They were also surprised to learn that the wings of butterflies are actually clear. The vibrant colors and patterns

come from thousands of tiny, layered scales.

Learning that adult butterflies can only consume liquids, Cain, Sr., who was joined by his son State Representative Briscoe Cain, taught the students to make a nectar cocktail of six parts water and one part honey to feed them and place it on a slice of orange.

During eclose, the final stage of metamorphosis, Lopez said her class butterflies played hide and seek.

"A lot of the teachers experienced that too.



Briscoe Cain, Sr. talks to an animated class of first-graders who were vocal in their love and support for the monarch butterflies they had raised.

They wouldn't come out and be seen," she said.

The process takes approximately 8 to 15 days to complete.

"For those that we did see the transformation, it only took about 60 seconds. They come out and then they hang upside down," she said.

A simple spot on the wings helped students determine which was male and female. They were also inspired to learn that only two percent of the butterflies in nature survive, while nearly 100 percent in captivity sur-

vive.

"They are big fructose lovers and don't bite," Cain, Sr. told the curious classes.

He also explained that with wind shear from the Gulf of America, the extreme migrators could travel up to 50 miles per day trekking some 3,000 miles to Canada for the summer and back to Mexico for the winter.

"We live in the flyway here in Texas," he said. "We live on Trinity Bay, and they have flown by us by the hundreds," Cain related to the children.

For five years, Cain has been sharing his love of monarch butterflies with the students and staff at Hamblen Elementary in Channelview. He is now one of those who count the number of butterflies in migration.

Before adjourning class, students asked Cain questions, one of them if the butterflies also had grandmas and grandpas.

"Yes and even great grandparents," he said.

Butterflies also have a remarkable sort of internal GPS that helps guide them to some of the same trees as their ancestors for wintering spots.

First-grade teacher Sharon Trudel met Cain and his wife through church and expressed an interest in hosting him to share his love of monarchs with her class and now the enter first grade. "He just stepped up and said, 'Let's do it!'" she said.

The students, she said,

Continued. See 'FLY DAY' AT HAMBLEN ELEMENTARY, Page 8

## SBDC Leader Urges Small Businesses to Plan, Adapt

By David Taylor  
Managing Editor

The North Channel Area Chamber of Commerce spotlighted resources available to entrepreneurs during its recent luncheon, featuring a presentation by Amy Reed, director of the Galveston County Small Business Development Center and interim director of the San Jacinto College Small Business Development Center, as part of National Small Business Month.

The program opened with remarks from Dr. Alexander Okwonna, provost at San Jacinto College North Campus and chairman of the chamber's board, who emphasized the vital role small businesses play in the U.S. economy.

"We have 33 million



Amy Reed, director of the Galveston County Small Business Development Center and interim director of the San Jacinto College Small Business Development Center, spoke to North Channel Area Chamber of Commerce members and guests last Friday explaining the purpose, mission, and services of the organization on the North campus. Services are provided free of charge to businesses.

small businesses in this country, and they are truly the backbone of our economy," Okwonna said, noting that success in small business often comes with significant unseen effort. "There's a lot of hard work behind the scenes

that goes into that, a lot of challenges that you all have to overcome."

Okwonna said the timing of the luncheon was fitting, as May marks

Continued. See CHAMBER LUNCHEON HIGHLIGHTS, Page 6

## NS Rotary Club Celebrates a Double Win at Conference



At Left, Bill Palko; At Center in Hat, Mini Izabuirre

The North Shore Rotary Club was honored at the District 5890 Conference, with two incredible recognitions:

- PDG Bill Palko was recognized as **Rotarian of the Year in the District**
- Mini Izabuirre was recognized as **The Large Club President of the Year**

Rotarians are very proud to be part of a club that continues to lead, serve, and make a difference in our community. Here's to the amazing members who make achievements like this possible.

# LyondellBasell Marks 35 years of Community Engagement at Channelview Facility



By David Taylor  
Managing Editor

CHANNELVIEW — LyondellBasell leaders, community representatives and guests recently gathered to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Community Advisory Panel (CAPLE) at the company's Channelview Complex, highlighting decades of transparency, safety focus and community involvement at one of the largest petrochemical sites in Texas.

Formed in the early 1990s in response to new federal safety and environmental expectations, CAPLE was established to give community members regular access to information about plant operations, safety performance and emergency preparedness. The first Channelview CAPLE meeting was held on May 6, 1991, marking a milestone that company leaders said continues to shape how the facility engages with surrounding communities.

"The reason why we created these community advisory panels is mainly because back in the 80s, they had a lot of events that happened in industry. Some of these events were obviously catastrophic, the Bhopal tragedy in 1984, and other incidents happened in industry," said Tony Wood, the site manager Channelview Complex at LyondellBasell.

"So back in the 1990s, the Clean Air Act was introduced by the U.S. Congress that required plants to be more visible and transparent with information. What kind of materials are you creating? What's going on site? What kind of environ-

mental things are happening?" he said.

The act assured transparency with the public and in response, they adopted process safety management standards (PSMs).

"All sites are now required to have these," he said.

During the event, Wood also provided an update on the Channelview Complex, which has been in operation for 69 years and spans 4,000 acres, with roughly one-quarter of the site developed. The facility employs about 2,200 people, evenly split between employees and contractors, a number that can rise to between 5,000 and 7,000 workers during major maintenance turnarounds.

Originally launched in 1957 with a single Texas Butadiene unit, the Channelview site has grown into a massive, multi-unit operation comprising more than 20 processing units. Products manufactured at the complex are used in everyday applications such as automotive components, home furnishings, fuel additives and other materials that support what company leaders describe as sustainable living.

Safety and emergency preparedness were emphasized as core priorities during the update. The site maintains an Emergency Response Team (ERT) of approximately 225 trained members, supported by year-round training and quarterly emergency drills. A 24-hour communications center monitors plant conditions, weather alerts and site activity, while centralized

control rooms now manage operations that were once handled in individual unit control rooms.

Environmental and safety performance metrics presented during the meeting showed consistent results over time, even as the site brought one of the largest units of its kind in the world online in 2023. Site leaders noted that environmental reportable events remained below historical averages during that expansion, while the Channelview Complex has exceeded LyondellBasell's already best-in-class safety averages in recent years.

Looking ahead, the company also discussed plans for a future Flex unit project, which would convert ethylene into propylene and propylene oxide. While the project was delayed because of market conditions, leaders said it remains part of the site's long-term growth strategy.

Employee volunteerism and community outreach were also highlighted as key elements of the facility's culture. More than 100 employees participate in an engagement committee that supports volunteering, education initiatives and regional outreach, expanding the site's footprint of involvement beyond Channelview into nearby communities such as Crosby and Sheldon.

As CAPLE enters its fourth decade, company officials said the panel will continue to meet regularly, with members helping set discussion topics each year to ensure ongoing dialogue between the facility and the communities it serves.

# CISD Students, Educator Recognized as NCACOC Honorees



Students and Educator of the Month were joined by district leadership following the North Channel Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon. From left, Superintendent Dr. Tory C. Hill, Emeterio Cruz, SOTM Aubrianna Del Bosque, SOTM Elijah Owens, EOTM Cheryl Brown, PhD, Neiman Owens, and Board Trustee Steven Dennis.

Two seniors and an educator from Channelview Independent School District were recognized for academic excellence, leadership and community impact during the North Channel Area Chamber of Commerce's monthly luncheon, highlighting outstanding achievement across the district.

### Students of the Month

One of the students honored was Elijah Owens of Channelview High School, a member of the Class of 2026 who also attends San Jacinto College. Owens is actively involved in several district leadership groups, including The Voice, the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council and the Long-Range Planning Committee, where he provides student input on district initiatives. He also participates in JROTC and the MECCA program, reflecting a strong commitment to both academics and extracurricular leadership. After graduation, Owens plans to transfer to Lamar University to pursue a de-

gree in cybersecurity and a future career in the field.

The second student recognized was Aubrianna Del Bosque, a Channelview High School student known for her advocacy and community involvement. Del Bosque is the founder and two-year president of the Channelview LEAD Club, where she has focused on empowering peers and encouraging campus leadership. She also serves as a two-year secretary of the Criminal Justice Club and is a member of the Varsity Speech and Debate Team. Beyond school, Del Bosque has worked with nonprofits across Texas to amplify youth voices and support community equity efforts. She plans to attend Rice University, where she intends to double major in political science and social policy analysis with the goal of entering the policy-making field.

### Educator of the Month

The Educator of the Month honor went to Cheryl Brown, PhD, an eighth-

grade English language arts and reading teacher with six years of service in Channelview ISD and more than a decade of experience in education. Brown holds a doctorate in higher education administration, along with master's degrees in education and organizational management and leadership, and a bachelor's degree in humanities. She is also pursuing a master's degree in theology at Baylor University.

Known for blending corporate leadership experience with classroom instruction, Brown creates engaging learning environments that foster critical thinking, communication and leadership skills. Her research on post-pandemic teacher attrition in Title I schools is currently under review for publication. She has been recognized at both the campus and district levels as Teacher of the Year and is widely regarded as a champion for literacy, equity and student success in Channelview ISD

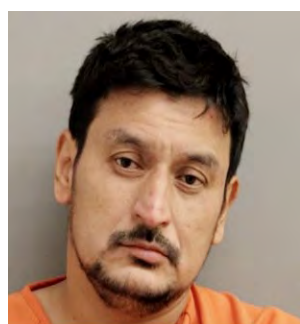
# Man Charged with Murder After Fatal Shooting of Wife in Cloverleaf

CHANNELVIEW TX — Authorities have identified both the suspect and the victim in a fatal domestic shooting Saturday in east Harris County.

According to the Harris County Sheriff's Office, deputies responded to a call along Texarkana Street in the Cloverleaf area at around 1 p.m. after a man called 911. According to deputies, the man said he had just shot his wife. When deputies arrived, they detained the man, identified as 43-year-old Jose A. Romero.

Inside the home, deputies found 39-year-old Yarina Marin de Romero in a bathroom with multiple gunshot wounds. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Homicide investigators say Romero told detectives he shot and killed his wife because he believed she



Jose Arquimides Romero

did not take his back pain seriously. The sheriff's office said he is now charged with murder and remains in the Harris County Jail.

Investigators say three children — ages 3, 8 and 13 — were inside the home at the time of the shooting but were not hurt. We reported on Saturday.

The Texas Council on Family Violence recently reported a 34-percent spike in the number of domestic violence-related homicides between 2023 and

2024.

Domestic and family violence cases in the Houston area have also increased at an alarming rate. Victims often suffer in silence because they feel scared, helpless or ashamed.

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, here are some discreet ways to reach out for help.

The Houston Area Women's Center has a 24-hour hotline for victims of domestic violence at 713-528-2121 or 1-800-256-0551.

The Family Time Crisis Center can also be reached 24 hours a day at 281-446-2615.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline is 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).

Crisis Text Line: Text START to 88788.

# Galena Park ISD Celebrates Student Advisory Board



Galena Park ISD recently hosted its April Superintendent's Student Advisory Board Luncheon, bringing together all members of the Student Advisory Board for a meaningful time of connection, reflection, and celebration. During the luncheon, graduating seniors took the opportunity to speak with their peers, sharing encouragement and advice shaped by their high school experiences. Their messages emphasized growth, perseverance, and the importance of maximizing every opportunity.

The luncheon also served as a time to recognize the service and leadership of all Student Advisory Board members. Each student was presented with a certificate in appreciation of their commitment to representing student voice throughout the school year. Graduating seniors were additionally honored for their years of service and received SAB honor cords, symbolizing their leadership and distinguishing them as they prepare to walk the graduation stage.

In addition, three seniors were awarded the SAB Scholarship in recognition of their outstanding leadership and service: Cairo Nieto of Galena Park High School, Melanie Perez of Early College High School, and Jase Tapiz of North Shore Senior High School.

As the school year comes to a close, Galena Park ISD celebrates the collective contributions of the Student Advisory Board and the lasting impact these student leaders have made through their service, insight, and leadership.



**CHARLOTTE'S WEB**

By Charlotte Jackson



**Helping Harris County Seniors' Pets**

**ASK DIAMOND JIM**

**Honoring Love & Friendships**

This week is a time of honoring mothers and the lasting impact they have made on children. As I was preparing to write this week's column, I was reflecting on the love I have felt this past week.

Many of you are aware I work for Constable Eagleton as the RUOK? Program Coordinator. Each week, I make approximately 700 phone calls to check on Seniors in our area, and I feel as though I am among the most blessed women in the world. The love and wisdom I receive each week cannot be measured. In addition, I have hundreds of young people who call me "mom" or love me as an aunt, grandmother, godmother or trusted friend. I also have many women who have been there for me over the years.

On Saturday, when I was notified of a tragedy in our community, I knew I could not face the challenge alone, so I reached out to my precious friend, Luz Lopez, who dropped what she was doing and showed up to join me in helping children and relatives face the harsh reality of a young mother's murder. As we gathered, my phone was ringing from local educators from the schools the children are enrolled at, as well as the supervisor of the oldest son who had to leave work to arrive only to realize his mother had been killed. Immediately others were calling to see what was needed and how they could help. Even without talking to some of the amazing women God has placed in my path, I knew they were praying.

Later Sunday, I ventured out to the Hockley-Katy area where I spoke to a group of young men, ages 15 – 21 who are currently incarcerated. While so many of them expressed the lack of a steady homelife or even a role model, mentor or friend, my heart broke. As I listened to their stories and heard the pain in their voices, I closed my eyes and prayed for the many young people in this world who do not have the joy of having positive influences in their lives. As I drove home, asking God how to encourage others to get involved, I received word that another young life was taken too soon by fentanyl.

I began thanking God for my grandchildren. Just the night before, my oldest granddaughter had attended her senior prom. I cannot explain the thankfulness in my heart as to how she has excelled in school, not just academically but the friendships and relationships that she has built during her lifetime in the North Channel Area. Thank you to everyone who has been there for my children and my grandchildren.

Life is hard but with positive influences, we not only survive but we realize how blessed we are. If you have someone who has been there for you, let them know today how much you appreciate them. If you have an urge to make a positive impact, find an opportunity and get involved. If you need suggestions, contact me.



Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston (IM Houston) provides meals for more than 4,900 seniors on a daily basis through their Meals on Wheels program. For seniors with pets, IM Houston also offers pet food through their Animeals program so seniors can care for their furry companions without having to share their own meals.

As a proud supporter of Interfaith Ministries for

Greater Houston (IM Houston), Judge Hidalgo was thrilled to support Harris County's furry friends at IM Houston's annual Wags & Whiskers Luncheon and Pet Fashion Show. IM Houston successfully raised over \$10,000 to provide food and care to more than 1,000 pets while ensuring homebound seniors and their furry companions stay together.

**Kicking Off Budget Season at Harris County Commissioners Court**

HARRIS COUNTY - As budget season kicks off, Harris County faces at least an \$87M deficit. In April, Commissioners asked county departments to provide a list of 8% worth of cuts as part of a financial exercise that will help give Commissioners Court options to balance the budget this season.

While no programs have been cut yet, this request will help Harris County utilize performance-based budgeting and identify which programs are most impactful to residents high-quality services.

Commissioners Court also voted to take the next step toward permanently funding nine of the most successful American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funded programs that had the biggest impact on Harris County.

These programs include efforts to strengthen workforce development and apprenticeship opportunities, reduce chronic disease, support maternal health services and reduce homelessness.

Judge Hidalgo encourages the public to get involved and learn more about the county's budget process so residents can advocate for which programs they most want to see funded.



**Diamond Jim: "Is Jewelry a good financial investment?"**

I'm asked this question several times a year, "Is jewelry a good financial investment?", and my answer is always the same, "No". Allow me to explain.

Jewelry is a great emotional investment for either yourself or your significant other. Putting on that new watch, a new chain, or that special ring can help make you feel wonderful! When a man wears jewelry, he's showing his pride in his accomplishments and his love for life. But, when it comes to knowing how jewelry makes you feel, nobody knows that better than a woman. Women are the experts in this subject, hands down!

**A woman can wear just one or two pieces of jewelry** or wear layered necklaces, more than one pair of earrings, and multiple rings on her fingers. Either way, the jewelry she wears speaks volumes if you listen closely. A woman's jewelry expresses her emotions and feelings with style.

When you love your jewelry and wear it often, it will become worn and in need of repair at some point. It's always a good idea to have your jewelry inspected and kept in great condition, especially if it's a piece to be handed down in the future. Repairs and maintenance costs do add to the cost of "investing" in jewelry. This is one reason that jewelry is not really a good financial investment.

However, the biggest reason that jewelry is not a good financial investment is because you will almost always pay more for your jewelry when you buy it than you will get when you sell it. You pay retail when you buy jewelry and get a percentage of the scrap value when you sell your jewelry. Since you'll be selling at a lower price than you paid, it's not considered a good financial investment.

An example of a very good financial investment is loosely related to jewelry and is known as "bullion". Bullion is the pure or near pure form of gold, platinum, and silver. Bullion is available in the form of coins, bars, rounds, and ingots. When you purchase bullion, you pay a small percentage over the "spot" price. When you sell bullion, you're able to get a price just under spot. If the spot value of the gold or silver has gone up, then you could easily sell it for more than you paid for it and that's what I call, "A Good Financial Investment!"

Buying and giving jewelry is always an expression of love and appreciation towards yourself or others. Stop by *Diamond Jim's PINEFOREST JEWELRY Experience* and we'll help you pick the perfect pieces of jewelry to show your love! We're also bullion dealers and we'll be happy to answer your questions about investing in bullion.

*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).*

**Texas Silver Haired Legislators Kick Off 21<sup>st</sup> Biennial Session at State Capitol**



Austin, TX. - The Texas Silver Haired Legislators (TSHL) return to The Texas State Capitol to the opening of their 21<sup>st</sup> Biennial Session 2025-2027. Legislators representing the 28 Silver-Legislature Districts (SLD) from all over Texas will begin arriving May 17 at the Wyndham Garden Hotel.

TSHL legislators have listened to their communities, researched issues of

concern to older Texans, and drafted resolutions for proposed legislation. These resolutions will be debated in the chamber of the House of Representatives at the Texas State Capitol. Adopted resolutions will be included in the biennial *TSHL Legislative Report* required to be delivered to the Governor, the Texas Legislature, and directors of the 28 Area Agencies on Aging in advance of the

90<sup>th</sup> Session of the Texas Legislature.

Ceremonial Opening of the 21<sup>st</sup> Texas Silver-Haired Legislative Session commences Monday, May 18, 2026 at 9:00 am in the House Chambers, with TSHL speaker Dr. Sherry Hubbard presiding.

"We sincerely thank our Texas legislators for the significant number of bills passed to address the needs of older Texans,"

said TSHL Speaker Sherry Hubbard. "We also remind them that we never give up, and we'll be back to address unfinished business. Older Texans and their families have benefitted from the 41-year service of TSHL to the State Legislature that has led to passage of more than 300 pieces of legislation related to concerns for the ever-growing population of older Texans," she stated.

**Texas STAAR Test Ends After This Spring**

TEXAS - After about 15 years, this spring marks one of the final times Texas students will take the STAAR, according to the Chronicle. Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, that end-of-year assessment will be replaced by three short-term tests.

Backers of the change say it will reduce classroom time spent preparing for the test and be a more accurate measure of students' progress. Critics say the changes will still place too much emphasis and classroom time preparing for the tests.

"The only evidence is that it will create more testing," said state Rep. Gina Hinojosa, Gov. Greg Abbott's Democratic challenger for governor. "We're going from 15 tests to 51 tests by the time a kid's done with eighth grade. It's outrageous."

The new Student Success Tool will provide three tests through the school year, instead of a single high-stakes test at the end of the year. Results will be available within 48 hours of each test, unlike STAAR results, which are usually released in mid-June, months after students take the test.



**A reminder to your graduate to always look on the bright side**

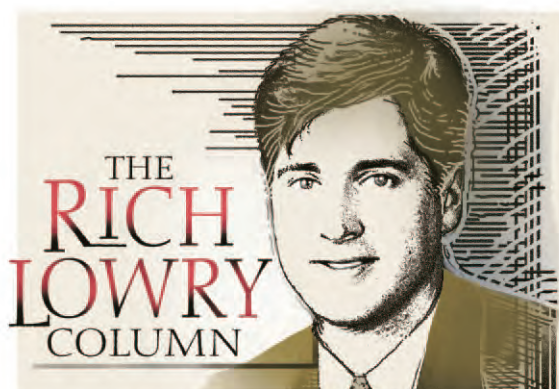


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OPINION PAGE



The Indomitable Trump

The Indomitable Trump
Andrew Jackson is the only president of the United States who got the better of his attempted assassin.

The aged Jackson was at the Capitol for a congressional funeral when a crazed man named Richard Lawrence aimed a pistol directly at his chest and pulled the trigger. It misfired. Jackson bull-charged his assailant with his cane and, incredibly, Lawrence pulled out another pistol. It, too, misfired.

As bystanders intervened, an enraged Jackson supposedly yelled, "Let me alone! Let me alone! I know where this came from." Lest we think we live in a uniquely inflamed, conspiratorial moment, Jackson's Whig opponents dubbed him King Andrew, and John C. Calhoun reportedly called him "a Caesar who ought to have a Brutus." Jackson thought the Whigs had orchestrated the attack, and the Whigs thought he had staged it.

Trump isn't a former general or wizened old Indian fighter like Jackson, but he partakes of the same spirit of aggressive defiance. By all appearances, the least fearful people in the ballroom of the White House Correspondents' Dinner were a random older gentleman from New York who kept eating his dinner during the mayhem ... and the presidential target of the attack himself.

Donald Trump is one of the most indomitable figures in the history of our politics. No matter how much he's mocked or hated, no matter how intense the controversy or how impossible the fix, no matter how dramatic the situation, he never breaks or loses his sense of command.

The ever-ebullient Teddy Roosevelt, who once gave a speech from shot-through notes immediately after an assassination attempt, might tip his cap. (TR takes the cake for badassery in the face of a threat to his life, given that he delivered that 1912 campaign speech while bleeding and with the bullet still lodged in his chest.)

A fundamental part of the Trump ethos is, as he said right after the dinner attack, when everything was still confused, "Let the show go on." For him, the show must never stop, and he's always at the center of it.

This is one reason that he had the instinct to pump his fist in the air in Butler, Pennsylvania, after he'd been bloodied and nearly killed by an assassin's bullet, demonstrating fight and lack of fear in an instantly iconic moment.

Anyone inclined to dismiss this trait as that of a mere entertainer should consider how showmanship has always had an outsized role in high-level politics; FDR referred to himself, in a positive way, as one of the top actors in the country.

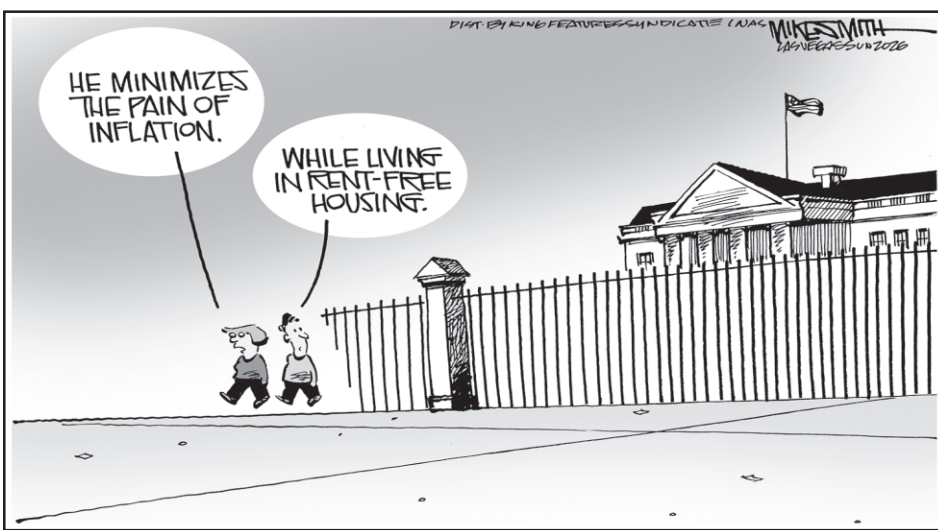
Trump's belief that he's always going to prevail and that if he doesn't, he'll find a workaround gives him an invincible self-confidence. It doesn't mean that he won't retreat if necessary, but whether he's being firm or flexible, he's equally upbeat and assured about his position.

He couples this with a hyperactive energy. Just look at Washington, D.C. He's deployed the National Guard to fight crime, cleaned up homeless encampments and public parks, vowed to make the grass look greener and the water in the Reflecting Pool look bluer, hosted a military parade, brought the coming attractions of an IndyCar race and an enormous fair on the National Mall, started construction of a massive new White House ballroom, and stated his intention to build a 250-foot triumphal arch.

His omnipresence, ambition and willingness to exercise power across two presidencies — spanning 12 years with the Biden interregnum — are going to make him one of the most dominant figures in American political history, up there with the likes of Reagan, FDR and TR in the modern era.

None of this means that he's right or wrong on any given question, and, of course, these characteristics all come with downsides, sometimes considerable ones. But no one can question Trump's resilience, or his preternatural ability to proceed unbowed no matter what the circumstance.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Gary Borders

Texas Awards First \$400 M in School Vouchers

State officials began sending out the first notices to families awarded education vouchers last week, the Houston Chronicle reported. In the first round, 42,644 qualified, mostly students with special needs who are considered the highest priority.

More than a quarter-million students have applied to the state's voucher program, with a lottery determining who gets a spot. Initial funding for the program is \$1 billion, and it is projected to support 100,000 students in its first year.

The program offers taxpayer money to help pay for private and home-school education. The amount of each voucher awarded in the initial round varied, from \$2,000 each for the 11,000 children applying for home-school funding to an average of \$15,585 for parents who documented their children's special educational needs.

SMOKABLE HEMP BAN TEMPORARILY BLOCKED

A ban on the sale of natural smokeable hemp products has been blocked, possibly until the end of April, by a Travis County district judge. A court hearing is set for this week.

The Texas Tribune reported that lawyers for the hemp industry argue that state agencies overstepped their constitutional authority by imposing new testing requirements that created a 0.3% total THC threshold. The industry says that effectively eliminated smokeable products by essentially rewriting the statutory definitions of hemp created by legislators in 2019.

While that 2019 law also limited THC levels to 0.3%, manufacturers got around it by cultivating hemp plants with another type of THC called THCA, which produces a high when ignited. The newly written limits on any type of THC mirror those that will be imposed by the federal government



in November.

APPEALS COURT RULES FOR TEN COMMANDMENTS IN CLASSROOMS

A federal appeals court last week ordered public school districts to place copies of the Ten Commandments in classrooms, the Austin American-Statesman reported. Parents and a group of faith leaders in nine school districts sued over a 2025 law that requires public schools to post donated posters of the Ten Commandment in classrooms.

By a split vote, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decided the law does not violate the U.S. Constitution, overturning a San Antonio federal judge's ruling last year. The case could be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"Students are neither catechized on the Commandments nor taught to adopt them," the judges wrote. "Nor are teachers commanded to proselytize students who ask about the displays or contradict students who disagree with them."

Six judges on the appeals court dissented, with Judge Leslie H. Southwick writing that "S.B. 10 is facially unconstitutional under the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses."

WORKPLACE FATALITIES DIPPED SLIGHTLY IN 2024

The Texas Department of Insurance has reported that 557 workplace fatalities were reported in 2024, the latest year for which

statistics are available. That is down slightly from the 564 workplace fatalities reported in 2023. More than 90% of the fatalities occurred in the private sector.

The most fatalities were reported in the trade, transportation and utilities sector at 175; construction fatalities, with 128, followed. The most common occupation involving fatalities was motor vehicle operators

A total of 75 fatalities were due to violent acts in 2024.

Men accounted for 92% of the 557 total incidents in 2024.

TEXAS ECONOMY HITS RECORD \$2.9 TRILLION

The Texas economy expanded to \$2.9 trillion in 2025, growing faster than the nation as a whole at a 2.5% rate, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. The state maintained its ranks as the world's eighth-largest economy, based on preliminary estimates from the International Monetary Fund.

"The Texas economy expanded to a record high of \$2.9 trillion thanks to the productivity of our skilled workforce and the entrepreneurs and businesses investing here with confidence," said Greg Abbott.

The state's economy has grown by 46% over the past 11 years.

WILDFIRE RISKS IN PANHANDLE, WEST TEXAS RISE

Dry windy conditions across West Texas and the Panhandle are rising, the Statesman reported, leading to increased risk of wildfires. The National Weather Service has issued red flag warnings from Canada to Mexico, including those areas in Texas.

"A red flag warning means a combination of warm temperatures, very low humidity, dry vegetation, and strong winds. These conditions can quickly spark and spread wildfires, and in this environment, even a small fire can grow rapidly, so extra caution is critical," Mary Wasson, meteorologist with the San Antonio Express-News reported.

The Texas A&M Forest Service reports that 9 out of 10 wildfires in Texas are human-caused and therefore preventable. Burn bans are now in effect in 102 Texas counties, and wildfire preparedness is at Level 2, with Level 5 being the highest risk.

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

Email: gborderstexaspress.com

THE POSTSCRIPT
By Carrie Classon

What We Remember



"I suppose I have to start packing," my husband, Peter, said.

It is always so hard to leave. Packing up from San Miguel de Allende is not a terribly difficult process because we leave the art on the walls and the dishes in the cupboard and, this year, a brand-new beautiful couch sitting in the apartment. We know that the hotel housekeeper, Lulu, will keep a watchful eye on everything.

So it should not be so hard to leave, yet it always is. Our stuff stays behind, and we leave with memories.

There is a principle in psychology which says that in order to slow time, you need more novel experiences. Childhood seems to last a long time because everything is new and everything is a first. As we age, we do more of the same things. This makes one day blend into the next, and one week into the one after that, and before we know it, 10 years have passed without it seeming like any time at all.

Coming to San Miguel, we find ourselves doing things we've never done before on at least a weekly basis—and this is unusual for a couple of people who are fond of our routines.

I write every day. I have friends who complain about this. "You should come to yoga!" they insist. "You should go to the hot springs!" "You should take an art class!"

They think I should make exceptions to attend morning events—events that occur right smack in the middle of my writing time. Occasionally I do. But 9 days out of 10, I am at my desk writing.

My friends' reaction to this is either to tell me that I am very disciplined or very boring. I don't think either one is true (although I will accept that I might be a little dull). I write every day because I enjoy it, and most of my enjoyment comes from getting better and getting things finished. It's no more complicated than that.

Peter is very much the same way about his morning hikes. Peter gets positively grouchy if he is deprived of daily exercise, not because he has a gun to his head, but because his long, strenuous hike is what makes him feel good.

Fortunately for both of us, there is no shortage of things to do and see in the afternoons and evenings, and last night, we had a going-away gathering of friends and neighbors.

We called it a book launch, although after two and a half months, I no longer think of "Loon Point" as launching. It's more like a ship out at sea. It has left me behind on shore and is off having amazing adventures with all its readers.

But I read from "Loon Point" one last time, and the violinist David Mendoza played, and we served food to friends. Everyone met someone they had never met before, and friendships were forged and a lot of fun was had.

Then Sebastian (who, unlike most of our guests, grew up in San Miguel) came out of the kitchen and announced, "It will rain soon."

Everyone looked up at the blue sky in surprise. Fifteen minutes later, it began to pour.

We said our goodbyes. We promised to get together again. Every person headed off to a different life in a different place.

I knew we would never meet again—not in quite that way, not with that exact group of people, not for that meal or that experience. And I will remember last night for all of those reasons.

Till next time,
Carrie
Carrie's debut novel, "Loon Point," is now available at both local and online retailers.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Opinions expressed here are not necessarily that of this newspaper or its staff. YOUR OPINION is welcome. Send a letter for possible publication to Grafikpress Newspapers, 5832 Star Lane, Houston TX 77057 or an email to GRAFIKSTAR@aol.com. Please limit your words to about 200. Letters will be subject to editing. Thank you.

# Gov. Abbott Tours Crosby Training Facility (IUOE)

## Highlights New Texas Jobs Council and Workforce Investments

By David Taylor  
Managing Editor

CROSBY — Gov. Greg Abbott visited Crosby Thursday to spotlight the new Texas Jobs Council and tour the International Training & Education Center, the flagship facility of the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) that trains operating and stationary engineers from across North America.

“The training and skills learned by workers like those behind me are helping ensure Texas has the best workforce in the nation,” Abbott said. “The Texas Jobs Council is delivering on that by equipping our current workforce with the resources they need to enhance their skills and develop premier job training at high schools, colleges, and apprenticeship programs.”

During remarks at the training center, Abbott emphasized aligning career training with the needs of Texas employers and preparing Texans to fill high-demand roles. He also credited the state’s business climate and workforce pipeline as drivers of continued job growth.

“I consider this to be the premier facility of this kind in the country,” Abbott said after touring the campus. “Components of this can be — and I would say must be — replicat-



Texas Gov. Greg Abbott was in Crosby, Texas touring the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) facility that trains operating and stationary engineers from across North America.

ed across the state.”

Abbott said the facility demonstrates “the resources that are going into making sure that we provide a well-trained, skilled workforce,” adding that efforts like the Jobs Council are intended to help Texas “continue to have the best workforce in the United States.”

Abbott noted that Texas has invested more than \$7 billion over the past two years in career training programs statewide. He also cited House Bill 20 and House Bill 120, signed into law last year, which expands career and technical education opportunities by strengthening partnerships with higher education and improving college and career advising.

Abbott was joined by state



Abbott received a tour of the facility from IUOE management prior to his press conference touting the new jobs council and Texas achieving No. 1 status for producing the most jobs in the nation.



The governor boasted the nation’s top facility of its kind in the nation and said Texas should replicate what’s being done, potentially on a different scale, to promote more trades jobs.

Rep. Briscoe Cain; Texas Jobs Council co-chair and Texas Association of Business interim president Megan Mauro; IUOE

Assistant Director of the Construction Training Department Tom McNamara; IUOE Local 450 Business Manager Mark

Maher Jr.; and other business and labor leaders.

Launched last month, the Texas Jobs Council is a state

advisory group that meets monthly and is charged with strengthening the workforce pipeline by expanding job training and identifying ways to streamline credentialing and hiring.

The council is expected to focus on:

Executive actions state agencies can implement immediately to reduce regulatory burdens and red tape surrounding workforce development.

Policy and legislative recommendations to present to the governor and Legislature ahead of the 90th Legislative Session.

The council is scheduled to deliver a final report in November 2026 outlining recommended executive actions and legislative proposals to strengthen Texas’ workforce development system.

“All of us are unified by a mission — keep Texas the best state in America for doing business and the number one state in America for jobs,” Abbott said. 042026 AbbottVisit 01 – Texas Gov. Greg Abbott was in Crosby, Texas touring the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) facility that trains operating and stationary engineers from across North America. President Donald J. Trump visited the same facility on April 10, 2019.



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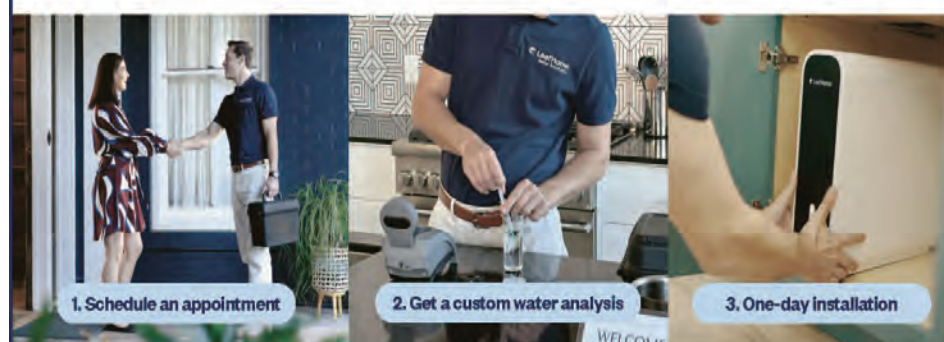
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# U.S. Supreme Court upholds Texas’ Newly Redrawn Congressional Map



By Eli Hartman  
The Texas Tribune

AUSTIN - Texas’ newly redrawn congressional map is officially cleared for use, after the U.S. Supreme Court formally overturned a lower court’s ruling Monday.

In November, the high court allowed the map to be used temporarily. Monday’s ruling maintains that status quo permanently, ensuring the new lines will be used for the 2026 midterms and going forward. The ruling ends the lengthy legal battle over Texas’ efforts to add as many as five more Republican seats to the U.S. House.

Texas took up this unusual mid-decade redistricting effort over the summer, after President Donald Trump pushed the state to help shore up the GOP’s narrow majority in what is expected to be a difficult midterm election for the party. The effort drew significant pushback, including from state House Democrats, who left Texas to temporarily deny the chamber the headcount needed to pass the map.

After the Democrats returned, the map passed, and legal challenges immediately followed. Several civil rights groups who were in active litigation over Texas’ 2021 maps sued again, saying the 2025



map was racially discriminatory.

In November, Judge Jeff Brown agreed, writing in his 160-page opinion joined by Judge David Guaderama that there was “substantial evidence” that this new map was racially gerrymandered. Brown, a Trump appointee, received a dressing down from the panel’s lone dissenter, 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Jerry Smith, who said the opinion was the “most blatant exercise of judicial activism that I have ever witnessed.”

Lawyers for the state asked the Supreme Court to block Brown’s ruling and allow the map to be used for the fast-approaching 2026 primaries. In early December, the court agreed, saying Texas was likely to succeed on the merits of the case.

Justices Elena Kagan, Sonia Sotomayor and Ketanji Brown Jackson dissented, saying the temporary ruling “disrespects the work of a District Court that did everything one could ask to carry out its charge — that put aside every

consideration except getting the issue before it right.”

Monday’s ruling fell along similar ideological lines. Kagan, Sotomayor and Jackson again dissented; no additional comments from the justices were included in the summary ruling.

The 2026 election season is well underway with the map drawn last year, but this ruling guarantees that map can be used indefinitely, at least through the next redistricting cycle after the 2030 Census.

But whether it will generate the results Republicans are looking for remains to be seen. Some of the new GOP stronghold districts were drawn based on Latino voters’ sharp swing to the right in 2024, but polling suggests that fragile alliance may be fraying over immigration policy and the economy. And both California and Virginia have approved maps aimed at generating more Democratic seats, potentially neutralizing any gains Texas has enacted.

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RFPs will be received until 4:00 p.m., Thursday, June 11, 2026 through the Electronic Bidding Website at <https://cvisd.ionwave.net>. All necessary information may be obtained by calling the Business Office at (281) 452-8003, or the district website [www.cvisd.org](http://www.cvisd.org), under Departments → Business Office → Purchasing. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

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## Chamber luncheon highlights small business resources,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

National Small Business Month, and introduced Reed as a speaker uniquely qualified to address the realities entrepreneurs face. He highlighted her experience as a business owner since 2010 and her more than 20 years of hands-on work in areas ranging from human resources and payroll to marketing and operations.

In her remarks, Reed explained the mission of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and its long-standing presence in the region.

"We've been around for over 50 years here in the Houston area for more than 40 years," Reed said. "San Jac has had an SBDC for about 30 years. So we've been here a long time, embedded in the community."

Reed told chamber members that SBDC services cover nearly every aspect of operating a small business — from strategic planning and market research to financial projections and marketing — with the exception of tax and legal advice.

"Basically, everything except for tax and legal," she said. "Sometimes, honestly, I'm a therapist. People just need someone to talk to about their business and then hopefully

some resources that come from it."

A key point of Reed's presentation was that SBDC advising and research services are provided at no cost to business owners, funded through federal and state support.

"You've already paid for it. So use it," she said, encouraging entrepreneurs to take advantage of the assistance available to them.

Reed also shared economic impact figures showing how SBDC work translates into growth across the region, citing job creation, business starts and millions of dollars in capital investment and increased sales supported through counseling and training. She emphasized that even in uncertain economic conditions, entrepreneurs continue to expand and adapt, often drawing on years of industry experience to launch consulting and professional services ventures.

Throughout her talk, Reed stressed the importance of solid planning fundamentals such as business plans, clear target markets, marketing budgets and financial literacy.

"If you're only looking at your books when the CPA

hands your tax return to you every year, you're in trouble," she said, adding that understanding profit, not just revenue, is critical for longterm sustainability.

Reed also addressed emerging topics such as artificial intelligence, cautioning business owners to use AI responsibly.

"Treat AI like an intern," she said. "You tell it very specific things. You check everything it does, and you teach it to do better."

Closing the luncheon, Reed encouraged chamber members to view the SBDC as a starting point for growth and resilience.

"We want to be the first one you come to," she said. "We want you to be successful."050426 NCACO-Cluncheon 01 — Amy Reed, director of the Galveston County Small Business Development Center and interim director of the San Jacinto College Small Business Development Center, spoke to North Channel Area Chamber of Commerce members and guests last Friday explaining the purpose, mission, and services of the organization on the North campus. Services are provided free of charge to businesses.



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Robert Pattinson, left, and Zendaya star in 'The Drama.'

'The Drama'

'The Drama' (R) — Who says we don't have movie stars nowadays when Zendaya ('Euphoria') and Robert Pattinson ('Die My Love') not only exist but continue to feed the souls of millennials and Gen Z with projects like this film!

posed to don their gowns and hit the altar. While the revelation itself has been subject to online controversy from viewers, the performances of the cast, including supporting actress Alana Haim ('One Battle After Another'), were praised. Available to rent on May 5. (Amazon Prime Video)

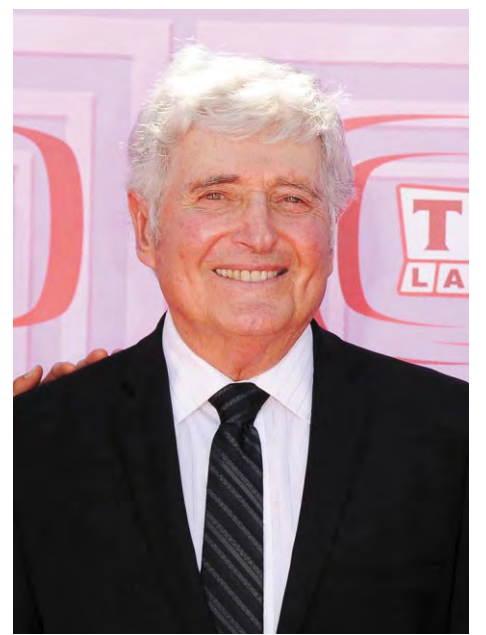
2023. (Props to them for getting so close to the cultural reset that was 'Barbie.')

'Hoppers' (PG) — It's a good week for a family movie marathon at home! This sci-fi comedy from Pixar Animation Studios stars Piper Curda ('May December') and Bobby Moynihan ('Saturday Night Live'), and it didn't do half-bad at the box office — pulling in about \$375 million against its \$150 million budget.

'The Super Mario Galaxy Movie' (PG) — The highest-grossing film of 2026 so far is now available to rent from the comfort of our own homes, which feels right for adaptations based on video games that we used to play at home all the time.



HOLLYWOOD — Bradley Cooper has committed to writing, directing and starring in a prequel for the 'Ocean's' franchise. There have been five 'Ocean's' films — 'Ocean's 11' (1960), the remake 'Ocean's Eleven' (2001), 'Ocean's Twelve' (2004), 'Ocean's Thirteen' (2007), and 'Ocean's 8' (2018).



Television creator, writer and puppeteer Sid Krofft (1929-2026)

Also in the works is a new 'Superman' movie. 'Man of Tomorrow' has David Corenswet returning as the Man of Steel and Nicholas Hoult starring as Lex Luthor again, as well as Rachel Brosnahan returning as Lois Lane and Nathan Fillion ('The Rookie') as Guy Gardner.

Hoult has 'How to Rob a Bank' releasing on Sept. 4 with Zoe Kravitz, John C. Reilly, and Christian Slater. Meanwhile, Brosnahan has 'Saturn Return' with Will Poulter and David Morse in the can, and she's also completed 'Lear Rex' with Al Pacino and Jessica Chastain.

My longtime friend of 50 years Sid Krofft left us this past April. Sid and his brother, Marty, were born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, and they were of Greek and Hungarian origin.

Eventually, as the duo became known as Sid and Marty, they started creating Saturday morning shows for

kids of all ages. It began with 'The Bugaloos' (1970), 'Lidsville' (1971), 'Sigmund and the Sea Monsters' (1973-1975), and their biggest hit 'Land of the Lost' (1974-1976).

In 2009, Universal Pictures produced a 'Land of the Lost' film based on their series but without their participation, and it starred Will Ferrell and Danny McBride.

This past September, after I wrote in this column about a remake of 'Land of the Lost' for the big screen that was in the works, I texted Sid a copy of the column. He texted back: 'Tony! It's great to hear from you. Thank you for thinking about me, and it has been a long time! Looks like you are still rocking and rolling.'

I remember when I was shooting stills of 'Land of the Lost' in 1976, and Sid told me, 'You know when I go, this is where I'm going ... to the 'Land of the Lost!''

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HOCUS-FOCUS comic strip by Henry Boltinoff. Find at least six differences in details between panels.

May 4, 2026 Posting Date

King Crossword

Crossword grid with clues for Across and Down.

Answers for King Crossword. 1. Supergirl's first name: KAL-EL. 2. Rid of wool: SHED.

Trivia Test Answers: 1. 'Heart of the Ocean'. 2. Theodore Roosevelt. 3. The Kwiwi. 4. 13. 5. Genesis. 6. 90-93 minutes. 7. Hellios. 8. The hand. 9. Three Georges Dam, China. 10. Margaret Atwood

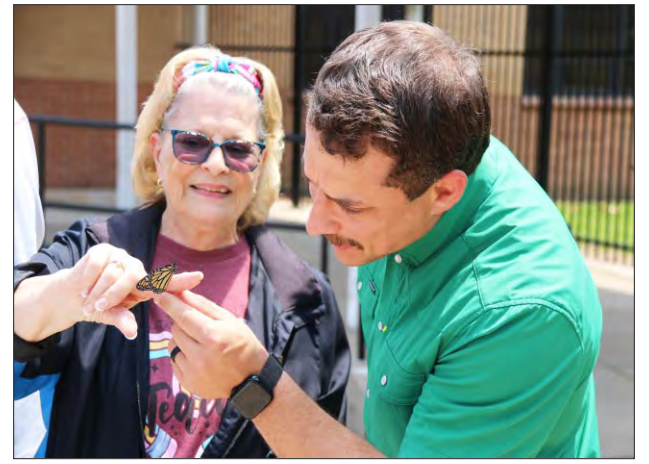
Solution time: 25 mins. Answers King Crossword

# 'Fly day' at Hamblen Elementary as butterflies released into the sky,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



First graders, their teachers, Briscoe Cain Sr. and Jr. were all there for the big release of dozens of butterflies on a beautiful day. The beautiful insects will join up with other monarchs on their way north migrating to Canada.



State Representative Briscoe Cain gets a close up view of a monarch butterfly that had landed vicariously on the hand of first-grade teacher Sharon Trudel.

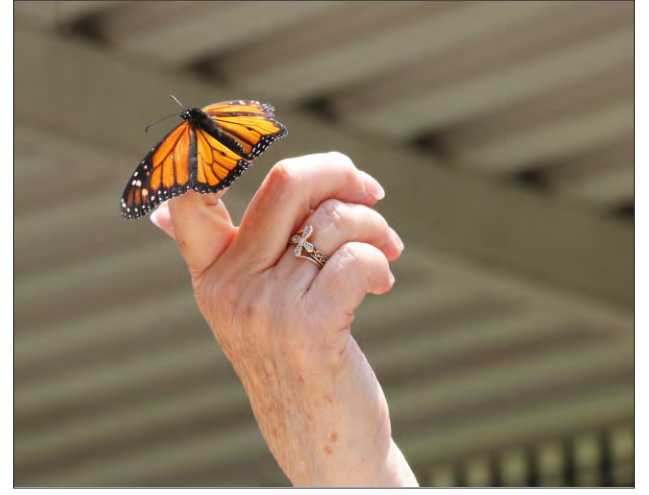
are fully engaged. "When you see their faces light up, learning about the life cycle of a butterfly, which carries over into every life cycle, it's great," she said.

The students, she said, are no longer afraid of butterflies and allow them to land on them whenever they want.

At the end of the celebration, Cain, Sr. was presented with a cache of thank you notes and thoughts of gratitude for sharing his gift and knowledge of butterflies.



First-grade teachers Arceli Cisneros, Sharon Trudel, Patricia Garza-Palori, Elizabeth Soto, Vanessa Lopez, Assistant Principal Rosalyn Thierry, and Counselor Hyacinth Natividad watched over students as the butterflies were released into the sky outside in the atrium.



The striking black and gold colors of the monarch are attractive to the students who raised them from small eggs.

## HCC Gains Valuable Feedback at Community Partnership Meetings



HCC Chancellor, administrators, and community members.



Community members share feedback during Q & A.

**HOUSTON (May 4)** – Houston City College (HCC) Northeast recently hosted two Community Partnership Meetings, bringing together community members and leaders from across the northeast service area. The meetings were held at the North Forest Campus and the HCC Northline Campus.

Chancellor Margaret Ford Fisher, Ed.D. and HCC Northeast President Betty Fortune, Ed.D. welcomed attendees alongside District Trustees Renee Jefferson Patterson and Monica Flores Richard. HCC administrators opened both meetings with updates and data on student enrollment, job market demands in northeast Houston, new HCC alumni initiatives, facility improvements, and the launch of the

new HCC website.

President Fortune also shared the latest updates on programs expanded to northeast area campuses that includes short-term training for Retail Pharmacy Technician offered at the HCC North Forest Campus, Phlebotomy, 911 Emergency Telecommunicator, Certified Nurse Aide, and VAST Academy programs at the HCC Acres Homes Campus, and a new Heavy Equipment Repair Specialization offered at the Automotive Technology Training Center in the Northline community.

Following the presentations, attendees participated in a question-and-answer session and engaged in meaningful dialogue with HCC leadership.

Community feedback included requests for ex-

panded food options at the North Forest Campus, praise for HCC's continued engagement and impact in the community, and suggestions for additional academic and continuing education offerings. Requested courses included Spanish and art, as well as preparation for Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) testing.

Attendance included new and longtime community partners, members of the HCC Northeast President's Advisory, former North Forest Independent School District board members, Super Neighborhood leaders, faith leaders, educators, representatives from community-based organizations and elected officials. To learn more about HCC programs, visit [hccs.edu](https://hccs.edu).

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Scan for steps on how to get started!

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