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Cypress Creek flood projects on track despite challenges

BY BROOKE ONTIVEROS

Three years after voters passed a \$2.5 billion flood bond referendum in response to Hurricane Harvey, the Harris County Flood Control District continues to work on flood prevention projects while dealing with funding and land acquisition issues.

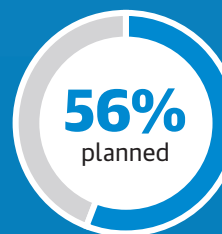
Although millions of dollars in projects are underway in Cypress Creek, HCFCF Deputy Executive Director Matt Zeve said the district would need nearly \$4.5 billion to protect the Cypress Creek watershed from 100-year storms, such as the Tax Day flood of April 2016, which have a 1% likelihood of occurring each year.

"Hurricane season brings risk for residents across Harris County. No single project or even group of projects will mitigate all flood risk for an area," Zeve said. "However, the district has completed a lot of work, with more ongoing, that will improve drainage conditions across the Cypress Creek watershed, and overall, the drainage level of

CONTINUED ON 26

MAKING PROGRESS

The Harris County Flood Control District has 14,000 acre-feet of stormwater detention planned for the Cypress Creek watershed. Experts recommend 25,000 acre-feet of additional stormwater detention. One acre-foot equals about 326,000 gallons, and 25,000 acre-feet is about 8.15 billion gallons.



14,000 acre-feet of stormwater
detention planned as of mid-August

SOURCE: HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT/
COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER



A Cypress Creek stormwater detention basin repair project is underway off Cypresswood Drive near the Jones Road intersection. (Danica Lloyd/Community Impact Newspaper)



**"I NOTICED SOME PEOPLE,
HONESTLY, THE ONES THAT
HAVE EVEN THE TWO
YEARS [OF EDUCATION]
... THAT ARE ABOVE
AND BEYOND THE
PEOPLE THAT HAVE
FOUR YEARS."**

MOUFID RABIEH, OWNER OF
ELITE AUTO EXPERTS

EMILY JAROSZEWSKI/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

Career and technical education program enrollment expands

BY EMILY JAROSZEWSKI

More Cy-Fair-area students are realizing a four-year university route may not be the path for them, as alternative certifications have grown in popularity.

Career and technical education, or CTE, programming is becoming increasingly popular because individuals can earn a comparable salary to someone with a bachelor's degree, according to Lisa Bogany,

CONTINUED ON 28

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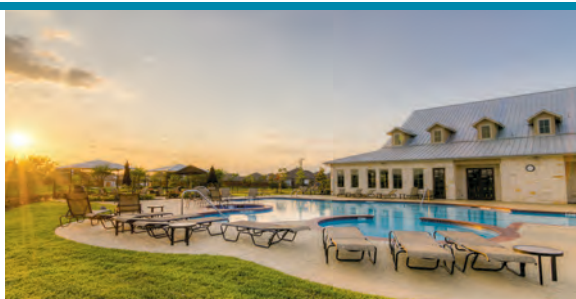


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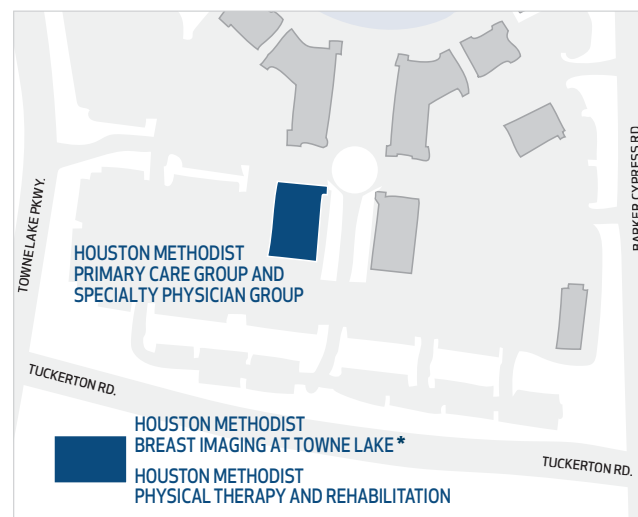


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ALWAYS REMEMBER AND
NEVER FORGET.



THE CY-FAIR FIRE DEPARTMENT 9/11 MEMORIAL IS LOCATED AT STATION 11 IN CYPRESS. THE MEMORIAL FEATURES WORLD TRADE CENTER ARTIFACT #I-0110J, A PORTION OF A STEEL BEAM RECOVERED FROM GROUND ZERO DONATED BY THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY. THE MEMORIAL IS BUILT WITH 343 STONES TO HONOR THE FIREFIGHTERS LOST ON THAT DAY AND ALSO HONORS BRETAGNE, THE LAST SURVIVING SEARCH DOG WHO SERVED FAITHFULLY AT GROUND ZERO AND WITH THE CY-FAIR FIRE DEPARTMENT (1999-2016).

ABOUT US



Owners John and Jennifer Garrett launched the first edition of *Community Impact Newspaper* in 2005 with three full-time employees covering Round Rock and Pflugerville, Texas. We have expanded our operations to include hundreds of employees, our own printing operation and over 30 hyperlocal editions across three states. Our circulation is over 2 million residential mailboxes, and it grows each month with new residents and developments.

Community Impact Newspaper teams include general managers, editors, reporters, graphic designers, sales account executives and sales support, all immersed and invested in the communities they serve.

Our **mission** is to build communities of informed citizens and thriving businesses through the collaboration of a passionate team.

Our **core values** are Faith, Passion, Quality, Innovation and Integrity.

Our **purpose** is to be a light for our readers, customers, partners and each other.

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Local business development news that affects you



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Regular updates on area projects to keep you in the know



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THIS ISSUE

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS MONTH



FROM EMILY: Fall is just around the corner, and lots of great events are planned in Cy-Fair. We are excited to bring you our Live Music Guide this month, featuring local venues hosting live music throughout the week (see Page 19). Jump to our To-Do List (see Page 9) to see ways to get involved, support local charities, learn new skills and plan fall outings.

Emily Heineman, **GENERAL MANAGER**

FROM DANICA: This edition marks our paper's 12th anniversary in Cy-Fair, and we remain dedicated to delivering useful, relevant information about what is going on in your backyard. Flip to Page 26 to read about flood-mitigation projects, and see how local agencies are responding to the latest COVID-19 surge on Page 15. Have a story idea for us? Reach out at cyfnews@communityimpact.com.

Danica Lloyd, **EDITOR**



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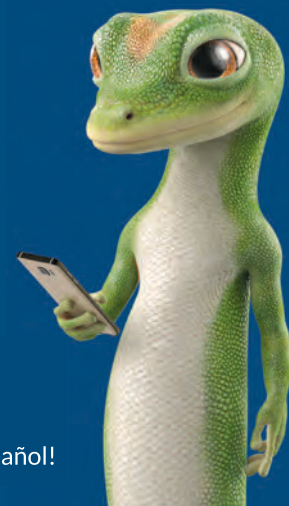


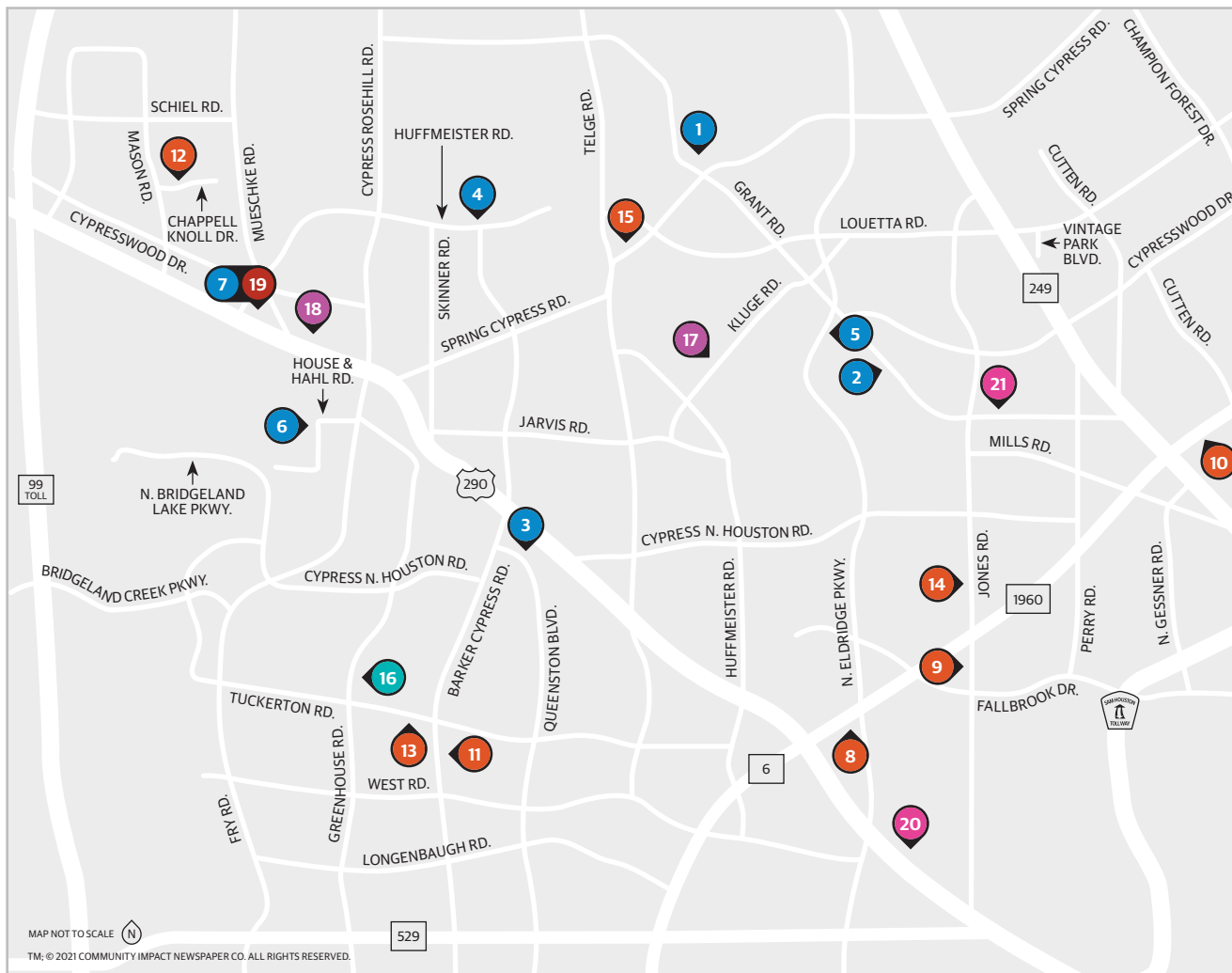
Denise Ramirez-Buckley

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Urban Bird Hot Chicken

COURTESY URBAN BIRD HOT CHICKEN

27126 Hwy. 290, Ste. 200, Cypress. The facility provides affordable medical diagnosis imaging through MRIs, MRAs, bone mass density, ultrasounds and digital X-rays. The clinic is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-6 p.m., and appointments can be made online. 713-425-8116. www.houstonmri.com

COMING SOON

8 Urban Bird Hot Chicken is set to open a second location in October at 12719 FM 1960, Houston, where Bullritos was formerly located. The restaurant serves Nashville-style hot chicken sandwiches, tenders and french fries, and its original location is in Katy. Online ordering is also available. 832-460-3966. www.urbanbirdhotchicken.com

9 A new location of **Ollie's**, a national discount retailer, is slated to open Sept. 15 at 10701 Jones Road, Houston. Ollie's buyers purchase overstock items, closeouts and manufacturer refurbished goods from well-known national brands. The store offers food, home goods, books, clothing, toys, sporting goods, pet supplies and electronics. 281-640-0151. www.ollies.us

10 Officials with Baker Katz, a Houston-based commercial real estate brokerage firm, announced July 26 that **Bel Furniture** purchased the former Star Furniture located at 7111 FM 1960, Houston, on June 9. The 60,935-square-foot store sits on 2.38 acres near Willowbrook Mall. Bel Furniture plans to open in November after remodeling. The retailer offers a range of dining room, bedroom and living room furniture. www.belfurniture.com

NOW OPEN

1 A new location of **Jersey Mike's Subs** opened Aug. 18 at 14044 Grant Road, Cypress, near the Spring Cypress Road intersection. The eatery offers a variety of cold and hot subs. Diners can place orders online, and delivery is available through third-party apps. This location operates from 10 a.m.-9 p.m. daily. 832-534-1998. www.jerseymikes.com

2 **Hideaway Social Poker Club** opened at 12215 Grant Road, Ste. K, Cypress, on July 18. The club welcomes players of all experience levels from beginner to advanced. The business is open 24/7 and

hosts tournaments as well. 281-251-0987. www.hideawaysocial.com

3 **Wrestling Collector Shop** opened for business Aug. 2 at 12234 Queenston Blvd., Ste. 200, Houston. The wrestling shop sells new and limited-edition WWE action figures. Shipping options are available online. 281-213-4185. www.wrestlingcollectorshop.com

4 **Water Tree Cypress One** opened July 24 at 16726 Huffmeister Road, Ste. A 100, Cypress. The business provides pure alkaline water through filtration systems, solutions, refills and portable options. 713-482-1894.

www.watertreecypress.com

5 **Adilene Hair Salon** opened this summer at 13750 N. Eldridge Parkway, Ste. 3, Cypress. The salon offers haircuts, hair coloring, extensions, waxing and other beauty services. 281-569-9523. www.instagram.com/adilene_hair_salon

6 **Wholemind Psychiatry** opened July 1 at 16518 House & Hahl Road, Ste. E, Cypress. The clinic focuses on mental health conditions such as anxiety, stress, depression, bipolar disorder and more. Appointments can be made online. 713-489-8964. www.wholemindmd.com

7 **Houston MRI** opened in August at

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The Toasted Yolk Cafe

COURTESY THE TOASTED YOLK CAFE

11 A new **Raising Cane's** restaurant is coming to the Cy-Fair area in late 2021. The 8956 Barker Cypress Road, Cypress, location is slated to open by the end of the year, according to a July 22 news release. The fast-casual chicken finger eatery will feature a double drive-thru and a patio with ample outdoor seating, officials said. www.raisingcanes.com

12 **Image Church** will congregate at its new location Sept. 12 at 20402 Chappell Knoll Drive, Cypress, at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. The church is led by Pastor Joe Ogletree and is relocating from Black Elementary School, 14155 Grant Road, Cypress. Services will be held online exclusively until Sept. 12, officials said. 281-758-5346. www.yourimagechurch.com

13 **7Friday Sushi** is slated to open in October at 18121 Tuckerton Road, Houston. The sushi restaurant offers a selection of sushi, bao sandwiches, poke bowls and vegan options made with high-quality ingredients. www.facebook.com/7fridaysushi

14 **Uncle Beans Coffee** is slated to open in October at 12105 Jones Road, Houston. Uncle Beans has one other location in the Heights at 3024 Houston Ave., Houston. The coffee shop serves coffee, tea, and a variety of breakfast items and baked goods. www.unclebeanscoffee.com

15 **By Faith Childcare-2** is slated to open Sept. 7 at 15014 Spring Cypress Road, Ste. 100, Cypress. The child care center accepts children ages six weeks to 12 years old, and registration fees are waived for September and October applicants. 832-334-5267

RELOCATIONS

16 **Carrie F. Blades Wellness & Aesthetics** relocated from Barker Cypress Road to Creekstone Office Condos, 10242 Greenhouse Road, Ste. 201, Cypress, on Aug. 2. The clinic specializes in bioidentical hormone replacement therapy and aesthetic procedures designed to help with symptoms of aging. 832-240-1032. www.bladeswellness.com

ANNIVERSARIES

17 **Houston Yoga & Ayurveda** at 13602 Kluge Road, Cypress, will host a 10-year anniversary celebration Sept. 12, according to owner Sharon Kapp. The business offers health-based yoga practices. The celebration will be open to the public and feature vendors specializing in holistic practices, the wellness field and classical dance. 281-256-8461. www.houston-yoga-ayurveda.com

18 **The Toasted Yolk Cafe** celebrated one year in business at 27008 Hwy. 290, Ste. 100, Cypress, on Aug. 2. The eatery specializes in breakfast, brunch and lunch, featuring menu items such as French toast, doughnuts and mimosas. The business is open daily from 7 a.m.-3 p.m. 281-304-2935. www.thetoastedyolk.com

CLOSINGS

19 **Rio Lindo Mexican Grill** at 27200 Hwy. 290, Ste. 160, Cypress, permanently closed in mid-August. The Mexican restaurant began serving Tex-Mex items in January after rebranding from



The Chef's Table in Vintage Park offers a range of cuisine, including the bone-in short rib.

PHOTOS COURTESY THE CHEF'S TABLE

FEATURED IMPACT

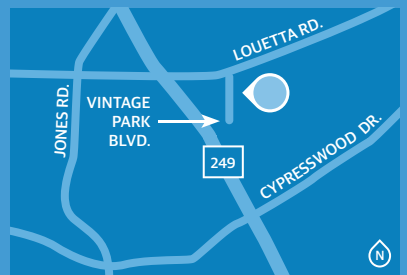
NOW OPEN

Owner and Master Chef Paul Friedman opened **The Chef's Table** in Vintage Park, 110 Vintage Park Blvd., Bldg. J, Ste. P, Houston, on July 19. With a menu inspired by Friedman's own personal travels, dishes available range from Beef Osso Buco and Portuguese Chicken Pendurada to Portobello Ravioli and the Bahji Burger.

In addition to boasting a full bar with craft cocktails, The Chef's Table has also partnered with Anura Wines to provide the restaurant's featured line of wine. The restaurant serves lunch and dinner daily as well as brunch on Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Reservations can be made online, and catering services are also available. 832-559-7489. www.chefstablehouston.com



The New Zealand lamb chops are served with mint sauce.



The Original New York & Chicago Pizza Co. 832-220-6662. www.riolindogrill.com

Tomball and in Spring. Menu items include pasta, pizzas, calzones and seafood. 713-983-6565. www.adriaticcafe.com

IN THE NEWS

20 Restaurant officials announced Aug. 3 that local Italian eatery **Adriatic Cafe**, 17402 Hwy. 290, Jersey Village, was damaged due to a fire. The restaurant will be closed until further notice as renovations take place but has additional locations in

21 **Soto's Cantina** at 10609 Grant Road, Houston, is temporarily closed after a fire occurred at the restaurant in late June. Owner Juan Soto said he hopes to reopen by the end of the year. The Tex-Mex eatery serves nachos, tacos, fajitas, seafood and combination plates. 281-955-5667. www.sotoscantina.com

more information at stmaryscypress.org

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MEMBER FDIC



SEPT. 11 SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP BERRY CENTER

The Cy-Fair Women's Club will host its annual shopping fundraiser with more than 250 vendors selling clothing, cosmetics, food, home goods, accessories and gifts. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Free (admission). 8877 Barker Cypress Road, Cypress. www.cyfairwomensclub.org (Courtesy Cy-Fair Women's Club)



SEPT. 11-12 WORTH THE TRIP: DINO STROLL GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER

Participants can walk through realistic dinosaur displays in a prehistoric setting. About 75 dinosaurs will be featured. 9 a.m.-8 p.m. (Sat.), 9 a.m.-7 p.m. (Sun.). \$14.99. 1001 Avenida de las Americas, Ste. E, Houston. 713-853-8000. www.dinostroll.com (Courtesy Dino Stroll)



Creekwood Grill regularly hosts live music events. (Courtesy Creekwood Grill)

SEPTEMBER

12 CELEBRATE FIESTAS PATRIAS

The annual Fiestas Patrias will feature a mariachi band, a regional Mexican band, a cumbia group, Aztec dancers and folkloric ballet. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Free (admission), \$5 (parking). Traders Village, 7979 N. Eldridge Parkway, Houston. www.tradersvillage.com/houston/events

12 SHOP THE BRIDGELAND FARMERS MARKET

Farmers market vendors sell products such as organic produce, juices and dog treats. Pets are welcome. 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Free. Lakeland Village Center, 10519 Fry Road, Cypress. 832-473-0559. www.ynfma.org

13 VISIT A FREE VACCINATION CLINIC

Senate Avenue Brewing Co. will host a COVID-19 vaccine clinic conducted by the Texas National Army Guard. The clinic will be for those who wish to receive their first or second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. Vaccine recipients ages 21 and older can receive a free alcoholic beverage, and participants younger than

21 can receive a non-alcoholic beverage of choice. 4-8 p.m. Free. Senate Avenue Brewing Co., 16000 Dillard Drive, Ste. F, Jersey Village. 832-295-3188. www.senateave.com

18 CELEBRATE OKTOBERFEST

Brew:30 Taphouse will host an Oktoberfest celebration featuring about 10 breweries serving their beer. The Homebrewed Brass Ensemble will perform polka music, and the Berlin Food Factory will serve German food. 4-8 p.m. Free. Brew:30 Taphouse, 15914 Telge Road, Cypress. 281-516-9315. www.brew30taphouse.com

18 CHECK OUT VINTAGE CARS

A Cypress/West Houston car meetup will be held at Twistee Treat. Any vintage car from the year 1995 and older is welcome to be showcased. No loud music, revving engines or acceleration will be allowed at the event. 6-9 p.m. Free. Twistee Treat, 7018 Fry Road, Cypress. www.carcruisefinder.com

18 VISIT THE CY-FAIR OPEN AIR MARKET

Cy-Fair Town Center will host an outdoor artisan and small-business pop-up shop. Local artisans and small businesses

will be selling jewelry, food, apparel, accessories and clothes. The event is family friendly, and pets are also welcome. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. Cy-Fair Town Center, 25680 Hwy. 290, Cypress.

23 GOLF FOR A CAUSE

The 17th annual Amber Alert pro-am golf tournament will raise money for the Texas Center for the Missing. Lunch and refreshments will be provided, and a happy hour, an awards dinner, an online auction and a raffle will follow the tournament. The format is a four-person team scramble. Noon. \$300 (individual player). BlackHorse Golf Club, 12205 Fry Road, Cypress. 713-599-0235. www.centerforthemissing.org

24 THROUGH 25 ATTEND THE FALL GIFT MARKET

St. Mary's Episcopal Church will be hosting its 15th annual fall gift market. An assortment of jewelry, home decor, handcrafted gifts, collectibles, sports memorabilia, clothing, candles, soaps and bath products will be available for purchase. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 5415 N. Eldridge Parkway, Cypress. 281-370-8000. www.stmaryscypress.org

LIVE MUSIC

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16416 Mueschke Road, Cypress
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www.barntx.com

SEPTEMBER

18 Def Leppard tribute, 7 p.m.
24 The Powell Brothers, 7 p.m.
26 Satisfaction—Rolling Stones tribute, 7 p.m.

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SEPTEMBER

09 Roger Tienken, 6 p.m.
17 Brandon Smith Band, 6 p.m.
18 Hurry Sundown, 6 p.m.
23 Joseph Rauma, 6 p.m.

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281-746-6352
www.creekwoodgrill.com

SEPTEMBER

11 Matt Sebastian, 6:30 p.m.
17 Randy Hulsey, 6:30 p.m.

Find more or submit Cy-Fair events at communityimpact.com/event-calendar. Event organizers can submit local events online to be considered for the print edition. Submitting details for consideration does not guarantee publication.

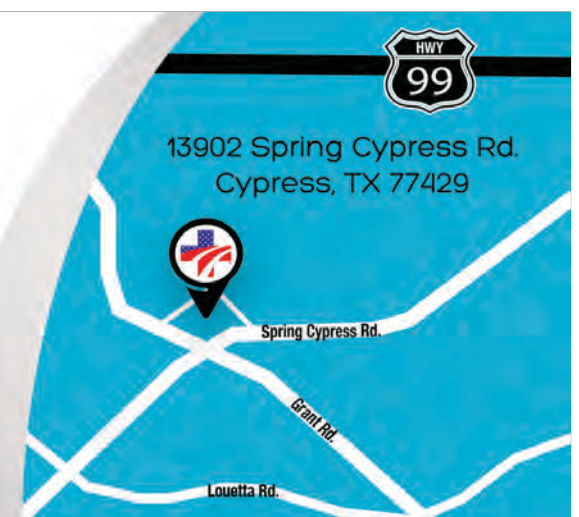


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METRO outlines light-rail funding developments, COVID-19 ridership effect on METRONext plan

Two years after the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County's \$3.5 billion bond got the voter green light to move forward with funding traffic projects in November 2019, President and CEO Tom Lambert described the METRONext Moving Forward plan's progress as "a collaborative effort" with local governments and agencies. The Moving Forward plan is described as over 500 miles of improvements to city transit centers, light rail and bus services, according to the project's website.

Lambert spoke at an Aug. 4 North Houston Association Transportation Committee meeting, where he thanked the Houston-Galveston Area Council for \$180 million in funds to begin the first phase of planning the METRORapid light-rail plan in Katy.

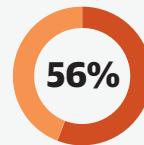
"We're now looking at connecting our northwest transit center to downtown Houston, inside [Loop] 610 from [I-10] to downtown," Lambert said. "It's not just [Loop] 610 to downtown. It's all those commuter buses that also come through the [Hwy.] 290 corridor, all those commuter buses that come from the I-10 corridor, and we'll have them connect the uptown line as well."

Lambert said METRO ridership on local systems was 56% of its prepandemic levels, while Park & Ride systems were at 86%. Lambert attributed the drop to decreased employment in Houston's downtown areas, where commuters would normally fill those seats.

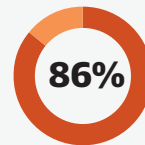
"Prior to the pandemic, 37%

COVID-19'S RIDERSHIP EFFECTS

Officials said commutes into downtown Houston have decreased due to the pandemic.



METRO ridership on local systems is 56% of its pre-pandemic levels.



Park & Ride ridership on local systems is 86% of its pre-pandemic levels.

SOURCE: METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF HARRIS COUNTY/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

"YOU'RE STILL GOING TO NEED LONG-HAUL SERVICES, BUT THE QUESTION IS HOW MUCH LONG-HAUL SERVICES, AND HOW DO YOU BEST DELIVER IT."

TOM LAMBERT, METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY CEO

of work trips downtown were by METRO," Lambert said. "Downtown Houston does not have the same number of employment."

Lambert said METRO had an opportunity to study and adapt the agency's models with employees potentially opting for remote work.

"I think we're going to learn a lot," he said. "You're still going to need long-haul services, but the question is how much long-haul services, and how do you best deliver it."

The North Houston Highway Improvement Project in part involves

rerouting and expanding I-45 through East Downtown and the Northside while abandoning its path through Midtown.

Lambert said METRO's priority was keeping the Texas Department of Transportation's planned \$7.9 billion funding for the I-45 project in Houston. He added the agency had been in "constant contact" with TxDOT and that it had "made assurances" on all of METRO's concerns. The North Houston Association published a call to action to support the controversial expansion on its website in July.

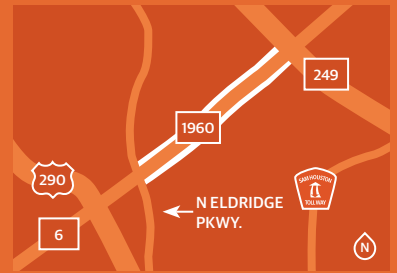
"This money needs to stay," Lambert said.

According to Lambert, the METRONext Moving Forward plan was designed in line with the specifications TxDOT has made publicly available in its record of decision for the I-45 project.

Lambert ended his presentation with a continued call for collaboration and public input.

"We're not in competition with each other; it's how do we leverage what each of us brings to the table," Lambert said.

ONGOING PROJECTS



FM 1960 resurfacing

The Texas Department of Transportation is nearing the end of its efforts to resurface the old asphalt overlay on FM 1960 from north of North Eldridge Parkway to Hwy. 249. Angel Brothers is the contractor on the project.

Timeline: set for October completion

Cost: \$3.6 million

Funding source: Texas Department of Transportation



Gessner Road extension

Construction began in mid-June on the extension of Gessner Road from West Road to Fallbrook Drive as a four-lane concrete boulevard with a raised median and gutter drainage system and two detention ponds.

Timeline: set for March 2023 completion

Cost: \$10.3 million

Funding source: Harris County Precinct 4

ALL INFORMATION ON THIS PAGE WAS UPDATED AS OF AUG. 20. NEWS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE OR OTHER LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS? EMAIL US AT CYFNEWS@COMMUNITYIMPACT.COM.

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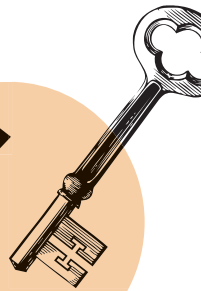
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- Manage Your Estate Distribution
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DEVELOPMENT UPDATES



EMILY JAROSZEWSKI/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

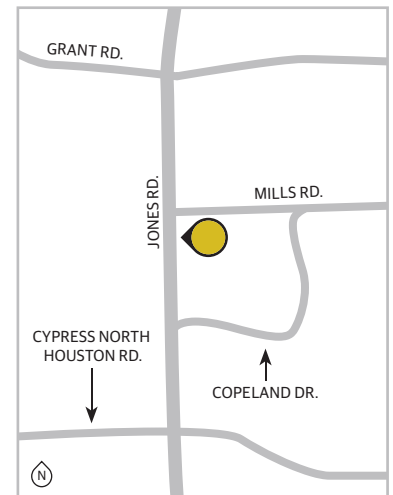
ARELLA ON JONES

New 55-plus residential project Arella on Jones broke ground in July 2019 at 12840 Jones Road, Houston, and is expected to be completed this fall with 229 units. Amenities include a swimming pool, a dog park, a golf putting green, an outdoor gaming area, a clubhouse, walking paths, two private dining rooms, a bar and lounge area, a theater, a billiard room, a fitness center, a dance floor, an arts and crafts room, a library, a salon, massage rooms, a business center and a medical holding room.

Space: 9.92 acres

Estimated cost: \$37.6 million

Timeline: opening in October



COURTESY CYPRESS ASSISTANCE MINISTRIES

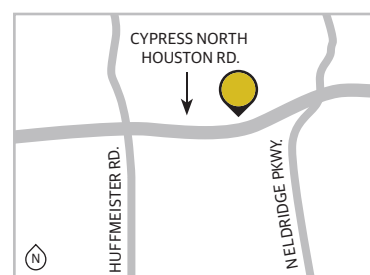
CYPRESS ASSISTANCE MINISTRIES

Local nonprofit Cypress Assistance Ministries is nearing the completion of a new facility where all programs will be housed—including the food pantry, the resale store, GED classes, emergency rent and utility assistance, and job readiness counseling.

Space: 20,000 square feet

Estimated cost: \$2.4 million

Timeline: opening this fall



EMILY JAROSZEWSKI/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

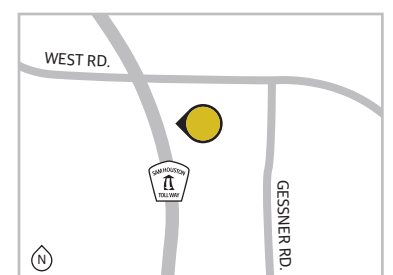
FIRST METROPOLITAN CHURCH

A new sanctuary is under construction at First Metropolitan Church, 8870 W. Sam Houston Parkway N., Houston, officials said. The congregation has been worshipping in a multipurpose building for about 20 years.

Space: 23,000 square feet

Estimated cost: \$4 million

Timeline: opening in April



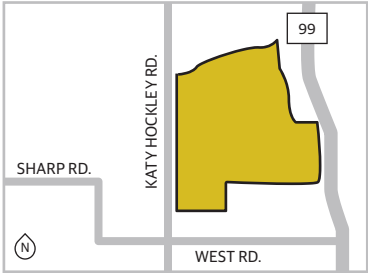


PRAIRIELAND VILLAGE

Model homes in the third of four villages in the Bridgeland master-planned community will be under construction this fall, according to officials with the Howard Hughes Corp. About 7,000 homesites are planned for Prairieland Village. Builders include Highland Homes, David Weekley Homes, Chesmar Homes, Perry Homes, Coventry Homes, Westin Homes and Tri Pointe Homes, among others.

Space: 3,000 acres

Timeline: opening spring 2022



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NO. 57

A new two-story elementary school funded by Cy-Fair ISD's 2019 bond is under construction on a 16.7-acre plot at 21211 Tuckerton Road, Cypress. The yet-to-be-named school was designed by IBI Group and will be built by ICI Construction Inc.

Space: 120,000 square feet

Estimated cost: \$32.6 million

Timeline: opening August 2022



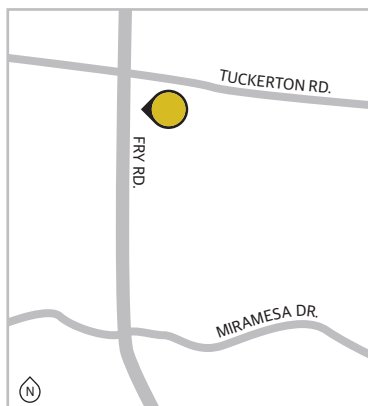
VENTERRA REALTY APARTMENT COMPLEX

Venterra Realty has purchased a 12.78-acre parcel of land near Bridgeland and will be breaking ground soon on a new 336-unit apartment complex, according to an Aug. 2 news release. The project will be located along Tuckerton Road east of Fry Road. The name of the complex and a construction timeline has yet to be determined, officials said.

Space: 12.78 acres

Estimated cost: TBD

Timeline: TBD



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Village Medical at Vintage

10220 Louetta Rd., Ste 100
Houston, TX 77070
Mon – Fri: 8am – 5pm

Village Medical at CyFalls

9511 Huffmeister, Ste 100
Houston, TX 77095
Mon – Fri: 8am – 5pm



Village Medical

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Cy-Fair health care system overwhelmed by latest COVID-19 surge

BY DANICA LLOYD

Justin Reed, assistant chief of emergency medical services for the Cy-Fair Fire Department, said the most recent COVID-19 case surge has consistently overwhelmed the local health care system at unprecedented levels since the beginning of August.

“Hands down, the worst I’ve ever seen in my career, and I just can’t fathom seeing it [get worse]. To get worse than what it is right now is a complete failure,” Reed said in an Aug. 19 interview with *Community Impact Newspaper*. “We’re managing, but anything worse than this—that’s that tipping point; that’s that breaking point where we start having massive failures.”

As of Aug. 26, there were more than 54,000 active cases of COVID-19 in Harris County—the highest number of active cases since the start of the pandemic. About 7,300 of those cases were in one of the 10 ZIP codes that fall within Cy-Fair ISD’s boundaries. Nearly 470 Cy-Fair residents have died from COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, according to Harris County Public Health.

But patients who do not have the virus are dying due to a lack of resources because the local health care system is inundated as officials manage the most recent wave of COVID-19, Reed said.

The surge has burdened EMS providers, emergency departments and intensive care units across the area, and the process of offloading patients from ambulances is taking longer due to staff shortages and capacity limitations, he said.

“Right now, when we take a patient

COUNTING THE CASES

The number of active COVID-19 cases has grown 114% year over year in Cy-Fair. Data includes cases in the 10 ZIP codes that fall within Cy-Fair ISD’s boundaries.

■ 2020 ■ 2021

Active cases in Cy-Fair as of Aug. 26



Total Cy-Fair deaths as of Aug. 26



Harris County COVID-19 hospitalizations as of Aug. 26



SOURCE: HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

to a hospital, our time on task has increased from an hour from when the 911 call is made until that truck is ready to respond to another call. Now we’re seeing seven hours—seven hours from when you call 911 until your loved one is in a bed in acceptable care and that ambulance is now available,” he said.

Finding solutions

Lone Star College System officials announced Aug. 18 first- and second-year nursing students will be stepping in at Greater Houston-area hospitals to fill in gaps from regional nursing shortages. Students will work in non-COVID-19 areas so full-time staff can better serve severe patients, according to a news release.

Reed said his department is also seeing an uptick in 911 calls from individuals who cannot access routine health care because providers are so overwhelmed.

To help alleviate the situation, he

said the Cy-Fair Fire Department took an “unprecedented” step Aug. 18 and implemented provider-initiated refusals. This means when patients wish to be taken to a hospital but their condition does not warrant an emergency room visit, officials will not take them to the hospital.

“The problem is our playbook has run dry, and so we are now [operating by] trial and error on things,” Reed said. “And the hope is that we as a collective society ... can get a handle on that because we have the solution. We just need to accept it and to lift each other up. The recourse is if we don’t, we will have a catastrophic failure in the health care system.”

As of Aug. 26, 58.6% of Harris County residents over the age of 12 were fully vaccinated. More than 10,400 patients with COVID-19 were hospitalized in Harris County at that time, according to the Southeast Texas Regional Advisory Council.

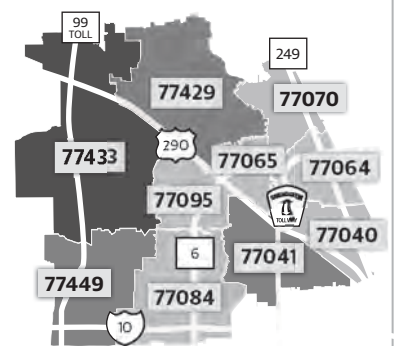
Hospitalizations and deaths in the

GETTING VACCINATED

Just over 50% of Cy-Fair residents over the age of 12 were fully vaccinated as of late August. To find a local Harris County vaccination site, call 832-927-8787 or visit www.readyharris.org.

Percentage of population fully vaccinated

- 40%-49%
- 50%-59%
- 60%-69%
- 70%-79%



SOURCES: TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

Harris Health System are almost entirely attributed to unvaccinated patients, according to CEO Dr. Esmaeil Porsa. Harris County has seen a sharp increase in residents getting vaccinated at its county-run sites since it started offering recipients \$100, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo said.

“The consequences of this tragedy are all the more tragic when we remember there is a vaccine that is safe and effective and widely available,” she said.

Emma Whalen contributed to this report.

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Dr. Tanya Stewart, MD Former Chief Clinical Transformation Officer, UnitedHealth Group

Harris County approves \$11M in violence prevention efforts

BY DANICA LLOYD

HARRIS COUNTY As part of a series of criminal justice reform initiatives, Harris County Commissioners Court approved two new violence prevention plans in a 3-2 vote Aug. 10.

Commissioners unanimously agreed at the June 9, 2020, meeting to set aside \$25 million for criminal justice intervention programs related to poverty, mental health and substance use. The new programs approved Aug. 10 will require about \$11 million from those allocated funds.

Harris County will invest \$5 million to create a Holistic Alternative Responder Team to work with community organizations to respond to nonviolent calls pertaining to issues such as mental health, substance use, homelessness and social welfare.

"To reduce crime, we have to break that cycle of crime, incarceration, recidivism and get at the root causes of crime, and as we all know, too often, the root causes of

crime are related to health and social challenges, like mental illness, like substance use disorders," Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo said.

Currently, 911 dispatchers have three response options when a county resident calls: the fire department, emergency medical services and law enforcement. By the end of the year, the HART will be a fourth option in limited geographic areas with plans to later expand.

A new division of Harris County Public Health that will house the HART program along with a Gun Violence Interruption Program focused in these at-risk areas could launch by the end of the year, officials said.

The Gun Violence Interruption Program, which will cost about \$6 million to implement, will aim to address the root causes of violence and prevent it before it occurs through community-based street outreach. It will connect at-risk residents to mental health, social, educational and employment services.

Criminal justice reform

Holistic Alternative Responder Team

Cost to create: \$5 million

How it works: The team will work with community organizations to respond to nonviolent calls relating to mental health, substance use, homelessness and social welfare.



Harris County approved \$11 million for two new violence prevention plans Aug. 10 as part of its criminal justice reform strategy.

Gun Violence Interruption Program

Cost to create: \$6 million

How it works: The program will aim to address the root causes of violence and prevent it before it occurs through community-based street outreach.



SOURCE: HARRIS COUNTY/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

14 candidates running for Cy-Fair ISD board

BY DANICA LLOYD

CY-FAIR ISD A total of 14 candidates are competing for one of three open Cy-Fair ISD board of trustees positions in the Nov. 2 election, including three incumbents who have each served on the board for at least 16 years.

John Ogletree, a senior pastor at First Metropolitan Church, who has served on the board since 2004; Don Ryan, the owner of Cy-Fair Insurance Group, who was first elected to the CFISD board in 2000; and Bob R. Covey, the retired vice president

of sales for American Alloy Steel, who has served on the board since 2005, are running for re-election to positions 5, 6 and 7, respectively.

Position 5 challengers include Courtney Spradley, Xavier Leal, Grace Horner, Todd LeCompte and Natalie Blasingame. Ryan C. Irving, Jr., Chris Harrison and Scott Henry are running for Position 6, and Michael V. Perez, Lucas Scanlon and Craig A. Jacobs will be on the ballot for Position 7.

Visit www.cfisd.net to learn more about the board of trustees and the upcoming election.

Jersey Village sets \$17M budget, tax rate increase for 2021-22

BY EMILY JAROSZEWSKI

JERSEY VILLAGE The Jersey Village City Council approved a \$17 million budget for fiscal year 2021-22 on Aug. 16 along with a property tax rate of \$0.7425 per \$100 valuation—up from \$0.723466 in FY 2020-21.

Mayor Bobby Warren said the council has made tax cuts whenever possible. The no-new-revenue tax rate of \$0.691336 per \$100 valuation would have brought in the same amount of revenue as the previous fiscal year, but council members could have approved a rate as high as \$0.888379 per \$100 valuation before voter approval would be required, according to city documents.

"The job of council is to try to balance that [budget] and propose a budget that tries to keep taxes as low as possible while continuing to meet the high expectations that our citizens have that they rightfully have," Warren said.

Although council members James Singleton and Drew Wasson voted to decrease the city's \$20 million capital budget, it was ultimately approved and will help fund the Jersey Meadow Golf Course clubhouse and a new city hall at Village Center.

The FY 2021-22 budget also includes \$2.1 million for the city's fire department and \$4.1 million for police department operations.

QUOTE OF NOTE

"WASHINGTON, D.C.; [LOS ANGELES]; BALTIMORE—THESE ARE NOT PLACES THAT I THINK THAT WE SHOULD BE TRYING TO FOLLOW THEIR MODEL. I AGREE... [WE NEED TO DO] WHAT WORKS BEST FOR US AND NOT NECESSARILY IMPORT OTHER PEOPLE'S PROBLEMS TO WHERE WE ARE."

JACK CAGLE, HARRIS COUNTY PRECINCT 4 COMMISSIONER, ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION EFFORTS

COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS

HARRIS COUNTY In the latest effort to increase vaccination rates, Harris County is offering a cash incentive to get a COVID-19 shot at any of its county-run sites. Those who get vaccinated will receive \$100 with their first dose, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo announced Aug. 17 as the region faces a surge in hospitalizations. The incentive is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act. Register at www.readyharris.org or by calling 832-927-8787.

HARRIS COUNTY Small businesses throughout Harris County that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic will soon be able to apply for grants ranging from \$5,000-\$25,000. The new \$30 million relief fund is subsidized by the American Rescue Plan Act Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. The selection process will be randomized but prioritized based on need. Social vulnerability index factors such as the location of businesses as well as the ethnicity and gender of business owners will be considered. Funds can be used to pay workers, suppliers and rent. The application window will open Sept. 20 at www.harriscountybusinessrelief.org.

DATES TO KNOW

There are several important dates to note ahead of the election.

OCTOBER

4 Harris County voter registration deadline

12 Candidate forum hosted by Cy-Fair ISD

18-29 Early-voting period

NOVEMBER

2 Election Day

SOURCES: CY-FAIR ISD, HARRIS COUNTY/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

MEETINGS WE COVER

Jersey Village City Council Will meet at 7 p.m. Sept. 20 at Jersey Village City Hall, 16327 Lakeview Drive, Jersey Village. 713-466-2100. www.jerseyvillagetx.com

Harris County Commissioners Court Will meet at 10 a.m. Sept. 14 at 1001 Preston St., Ste. 934, Houston. 713-274-1111. www.harriscountytx.gov



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CY-FAIR Live Music GUIDE

COMPILED BY EMILY JAROSZEWSKI

With a growing live-music scene in their own backyard, Cy-Fair residents do not need to travel far to see talented artists perform. Several area venues host live music each weekend with genres varying from classic rock and country to smooth jazz.

KEY

D Dog friendly **F** Food **B** Bar

INDOOR VENUES

Backyard Grill

Live music: Fridays at 8 p.m.

Featured genres: blues, folk, soul, acoustic

9453 Jones Road, Houston

281-897-9200

www.thebackyardgrill.com

F B

Creekwood Grill

Live music: Fridays and Saturdays at 6:30 p.m.

Featured genres: country, rock

12710 Telge Road, Cypress

281-746-6352

www.creekwoodgrill.com

F B

Mo's Irish Pub

Live music: Monthly on Saturdays (times vary)

Featured genres: varies

14102 Mueschke Road, Cypress

281-213-2989

www.mosirishpub.com/cypress

F B

The Hidden Cellar Wine Bar

Live music: Fridays and Saturdays at 7 p.m.

Featured genres: smooth jazz, acoustic

16518 House & Hahl Road, Cypress

281-304-2940

www.hiddencellarcypress.com

F B

OUTDOOR VENUES

Boardwalk at Towne Lake

Live music: Fridays and Saturdays from 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Featured genres: varies

9945 Barker Cypress Road, Cypress

713-690-0000

www.boardwalktl.com

D F B

Vintage Park

Live music: Sunday-Tuesday from 7-10 p.m.

Featured genres: varies

110 Vintage Park Blvd., Ste. 270, Houston

281-655-8000

www.vintageparkhouston.com

D F B

INDOOR/OUTDOOR VENUES

Brew:30 Taphouse

Live music: dates and times vary

Featured genres: rock, country, '80s

15914 Telge Road, Cypress

281-516-9315

www.brew30taphouse.com

D F B

Cypress Trail Hideout

Live music: Fridays and Saturdays at 7 p.m.

Featured genres: country

25610 Hempstead Road, Cypress

281-213-4136

www.cypresstrailhideout.com

D F B

Murdoch's Backyard Pub

Live music: Saturdays from 6-9 p.m.

Featured genres: 70s to present, rock, pop

18541 Mueschke Road, Cypress

281-516-9753

www.murdochsbakyard.com

D F B

Rosehill Beer Garden

Live music: Fridays and Saturdays from 7-10 p.m.

Featured genres: rock, country, acoustic

14540 Cypress Rosehill Road, Cypress

281-213-4347

www.rosehillbeer.com

D F B

Senate Avenue Brewing Co.

Live music: Thursdays (times vary)

Featured genres: acoustic, folk,

Americana, rock, country

16000 Dillard Drive, Ste. F, Jersey Village

832-295-3188

www.senateave.com

D F B

The Burger Ranch

Live music: Thursday-Saturday from 6-9 p.m.

Featured genres: country, rock,

blues, island

16702 House & Hahl Road, Cypress

832-881-9080

www.theburgerranch.com

D F B

Twisted Acre Brewery

Live music: Saturdays from 6-9 p.m.

Featured genres: country, rock, acoustic

Food trucks available Thu.-Sat.

16103 Grant Road, Ste. J, Cypress

832-953-4707

www.facebook.com/twistedacrebrewery

D F B

Whatever Sports Bar and Grill

Live music: Saturdays (times vary)

Featured genres: country, bluegrass,

soul, rock and roll

11902 Jones Road, Houston

281-807-9229

www.facebook.com/whateversportsbar

D F B



COURTESY THE BARN AT FRIO GRILL

LOCAL HOT SPOT

THE BARN AT FRIO GRILL

The Barn at Frio Grill opened in fall 2018 with live music on the weekends. The venue offers a full bar and a menu of appetizers, flatbreads and sandwiches. Owner Anthony Wegmann said the venue typically hosts country music but also hosted Snoop Dogg, a dueling pianos night and Tejano musician Gary Hobbs this summer. There are also plans to host a comedy night and rock tribute bands this fall. See what else Wegmann had to share in the Q&A below.

16416 Mueschke Road, Cypress

281-968-4220

www.barnrx.com

D F B

Q&A WITH OWNER ANTHONY WEGMANN

Q: WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE BARN AT FRIO GRILL?

A: Our vision for the venue is to become the best live music venue in Cypress—and hopefully in Texas. We wanted to create a relaxed outdoor music venue, with a great vibe that everyone can enjoy. We have great patio spaces, a huge craft beer draft wall and an amazing array of spirits.

Q: WHAT MAKES YOUR VENUE UNIQUE?

A: I think what makes us unique is the property as a whole. Being situated on 5 acres and with The Frio Hill Country Grill across the parking lot, it is a great concert experience to grab delicious food, relax, get great service and enjoy live music. It's almost like you are transported to West Texas when you arrive. It feels like you have left the city behind.



Cypress Trail Hideout hosts country music on Fridays and Saturdays.

COURTESY CYPRESS TRAIL HIDEOUT



Senate Avenue Brewing Co. opened last fall and hosts live music on Thursdays.

COURTESY SENATE AVENUE BREWING CO.



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Jo Ann Bigcas took ownership of All About Music & Arts in 2017.

EMILY JAROSZEWSKI/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER



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All About Music & Arts

Instructor passionate about sharing love of music

Jo Ann Bigcas was never given an option whether she wanted to pursue music. Instead, her parents had her learn to play the piano when she was six years old, performing at the church where her father served as pastor.

Bigcas grew up in the Philippines until she came to the United States at age 18 on a scholarship. She earned a degree in music from Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina. Because music had been such a part of her life from a young age, she decided she wanted to use it to pursue a career as a teacher. She said she taught her first student at age 15.

"I got into [music] because I didn't have a choice growing up," she said. "But teaching, I just [always] wanted to do."

All About Music & Arts opened in October 1996 and was founded by

Linda Paredes. Starting in 1997, Bigcas taught for the school for about nine years before taking a leave of absence to raise her family.

During that time, Bigcas continued to teach lessons from home and returned to All About Music & Arts in 2014. Three years later, she purchased the business when Paredes retired.

The business offers a variety of classes in piano, voice, guitar, violin, flute, trumpet and art mediums, among others, for ages 5 and up. Students can take individual lessons or learn in a group of two to three for 30 minutes to an hour once a week. Additionally, the business offers "club rock," which is two to five students performing different instruments in a band.

The business relocated from Cypress North Houston Road to Kluge Road last September. Due to

low numbers of students attending classes because of the pandemic, All About Music & Arts was forced to close from March to June 2020, Bigcas said. She said parents could no longer afford lessons after being laid off, but rent was much cheaper at their new location.

"[With] a lot of the students, their parents had to quit because [they] lost their job because of COVID," she said.

During their shutdown, Bigcas began holding online classes for her students. Now, she holds online and in-person lessons. She said she is always looking to grow her classes and empower more students to learn to play new instruments.

"So they don't look at the instrument and [think], 'This is something I hate,'" she said. "But they would enjoy it."

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2 GUITAR LESSONS



Guitar lessons are taught by Bryan Bejarano, Luis Aguirre, Mary Tooke and Victor Morales.

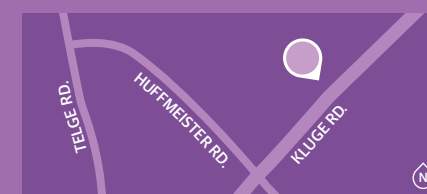
All About Music & Arts

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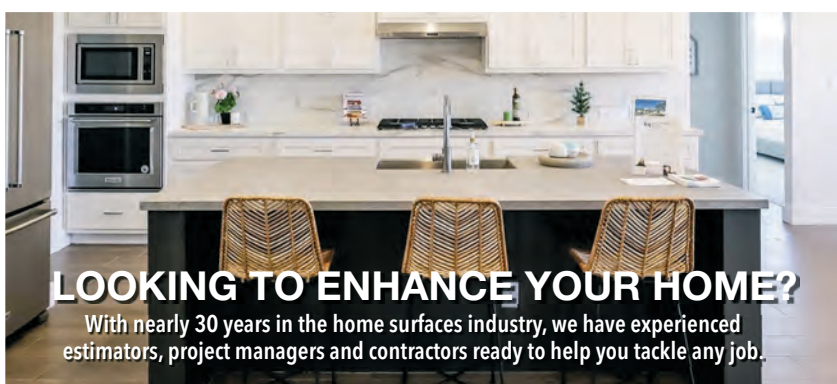
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Mezzanotte Ristorante

Husband and wife specialize in Italian cuisine

Gerry and Adriana Sarmiento had no experience—other than their love for food—when they entered the restaurant business. The two met as employees for Compaq, a computer company that specializes in information technology.

“We are not restaurant people. It’s not our background,” Gerry said.

The couple has lived in Cy-Fair since they got married in 2004. Adriana wanted to move to a quiet area to start a family. The couple realized there were not many restaurants in Cypress at the time, and they often drove to other parts of the city, such as the Galleria or downtown Houston area, for dinner.

The Sarmientos opened Mezzanotte Ristorante in 2005. They considered

serving Peruvian food since Gerry is from Lima, but they did not see demand for that among Cy-Fair residents.

They ultimately decided to open an Italian restaurant with no intent to operate it; they only planned to finance the business and let someone else run the restaurant. However, those plans changed after a few years of operation.

In 2007, the couple had a rough year of business and debated closing the restaurant. However, Gerry said he wanted to continue the business and decided to take matters into

his own hands by learning how to cook. He became the head chef at the restaurant, and Adriana stepped in as the general manager.

“It was very, very challenging because I had never cooked professionally in my life,” he said. “Somebody had to do it, so I learned very fast, and it came natural to me.”

Gerry had taken a few classes at the Culinary Institute in New York and the Culinary Institute of America. However, most of the recipes came from his own desire to cook and try new foods.

“I’ve always been into cooking, so my inspiration for recipes comes from years of eating,” he said.

Mezzanotte serves Italian dishes and has specials weekly. On Wednesday nights,

they serve tapas plates; Thursday nights have a three-course petit filet mignon special; and live entertainment is held on weekends. Gerry said about 80% of customers who dine at Mezzanotte are regulars and know the waiters, who are longtime employees of the restaurant. Most servers have been with Mezzanotte for at least seven years, he said.

Gerry said he does not have any plans to expand Mezzanotte or turn it into a franchise.

“We’re very happy with just this operation,” he said. “We just plan to stay like this.”

“I’VE ALWAYS BEEN INTO COOKING, SO MY INSPIRATION FOR RECIPES COMES FROM YEARS OF EATING.”

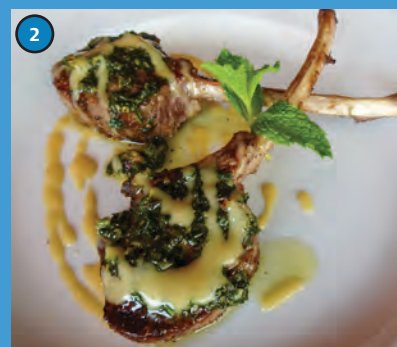
GERRY SARMIENTO, CO-OWNER OF MEZZANOTTE RISTORANTE



Gerry and Adriana Sarmiento opened Mezzanotte Ristorante in 2005, where they serve classic Italian dishes. (Photos by Emily Jaroszewski/Community Impact Newspaper)

TOP 3 DISHES TO TRY

- 1 **Fritura di calamari** is battered and fried squid served with sun-dried tomato aioli and marinara (\$13).
- 2 **Baby lamb chops al pistacchio** are grilled medium rare and served with mint and pistachio pesto (\$17).
- 3 **Pappardelle bolognese** is tossed with light veal, pork and beef bolognese sauce (\$20).

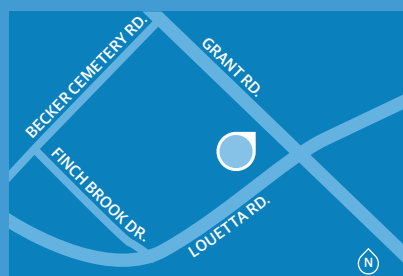


Mezzanotte Ristorante

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GET TO KNOW...



John Ogletree Position 5

- Married 48 years to high school sweetheart Evelyn, former teacher and counselor. Four children graduated from CFISD schools and are college graduates. All are married. 13 grandchildren, five attending CFISD schools
- BA in Government from University of Texas at Arlington and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from South Texas College of Law
- Co-Founder and Senior Pastor of First Metropolitan Church
- Served on the CFISD Board since 2004, served in all officer positions
- TASB Master Trustee
- Honoree @ CFISD 75th Anniversary Celebration
- 2015 TASA State Honor Board of the Year
- Hired both Dr. David Anthony and Dr. Mark Henry
- CFISD Global Volunteer, Reader, Mentor and Bus Buddy



Don Ryan Position 6

- Lived in Cy-Fair community for 50 years and graduated from Cy-Fair High School
- Married 35 years to Julie. Three children graduated from Cy-Fair High School. Two are college graduates and youngest is a senior in college. The two oldest are married. One grandchild
- BBA from University of North Texas
- Insurance Agent and Health Insurance Marketplace Circle of Champions 2019-2021
- Served on the CFISD Board since 2000, served in all officer positions
- Honoree @ CFISD 75th Anniversary Celebration
- 2002 and 2015 TASA State Honor Board of the Year
- Hired both Dr. David Anthony and Dr. Mark Henry
- CFISD Global Volunteer, Reader, Mentor and Bus Buddy



Bob Covey Position 7

- Married 48 years to Kathleen, retired 30+ year elementary teacher. Three sons and one of three daughters-in-law graduated from CFISD schools and all are college graduates. Seven grandchildren, five attending CFISD schools
- BS in Music Education from Texas State University and teacher for three years
- Worked in management and sales at American Alloy Steel for 40 years
- Served on the CFISD Board since 2005, served in all officer positions
- Founder and President of Go Public Gulf Coast
- TASB Board Officer and Master Trustee
- 2015 TASA State Honor Board of the Year
- Hired Dr. Mark Henry
- CFISD Global Volunteer, Reader, Mentor and Bus Buddy

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Bobby Warren

Mayor of Jersey Village

Bobby Warren was elected mayor of Jersey Village in May, but the Harris County native said he never pictured himself running for mayor of a small city. He graduated with a communication degree from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, where he met his wife through the speech and debate program. The two married in 2010 after Warren graduated from the University of Houston Law Center and was licensed in 2005.

When looking to purchase a new home, he said the couple's wishlist included a beautiful neighborhood with large yards and unique homes. These boxes and more were checked in Jersey Village, where they have lived for about seven years. In 2017, Warren successfully ran for a seat on Jersey Village City Council. Two years later, he was re-elected with no challengers, and he won the mayoral race this spring with 74% of voters' support.

The oil and gas compliance manager recently discussed flood mitigation efforts, economic development and the future of Jersey Village with *Community Impact Newspaper*. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

WHAT IS YOUR TOP PRIORITY AS MAYOR?

My main goal is to continue the work that has been laid out over the last several years. Certainly, flood mitigation is a real key goal. We had a flooding event here in 2016, and we were extraordinarily lucky with Hurricane Harvey [the following year] to maybe have one or two homes that may have had some flooding. ... A lot of the flood mitigation infrastructure that's in place here did its job.

We've had a lot of success with our efforts to get federal funding for projects such as the golf course berm and Wall Street project that's underway. We've still got dozens of homes that are in potential danger of being seriously damaged in a flood, but we also have a lot of homes that we've gotten out of the flood plain.

Because the federal funding presents a lot of red tape ... we've also been looking at ways to utilize a possible public-private partnership where the

city would purchase the land from the homeowner; we would incur the cost of demolishing the home and then sell it to a developer to build a new home that's outside of the flood plain.

OTHER THAN FLOOD MITIGATION, WHAT ARE SOME OTHER AREAS OF FOCUS FOR YOU?

Besides that, we have always placed a lot of emphasis on public safety—trying to continue to improve our police and fire departments that were already great, but we always want to make sure we're providing them the best equipment, best training and all the resources that they need.

For the longest time we've had the Jersey Village Crime Control and Prevention District where a half-cent of our sales tax was dedicated entirely to law enforcement. We recently put to the voters a proposal to create a similar district for the fire department, and they approved that just this past May, so we are getting that up and running.



SOURCES: CITY OF JERSEY VILLAGE, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

JERSEY VILLAGE BY THE NUMBERS

The city of Jersey Village was incorporated 65 years ago and is home to about 8,000 residents.



YEAR OF INCORPORATION

1956



TOTAL AREA

3.4 SQ. MILES

POPULATION

7,933



MEDIAN AGE

44.3

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$72,852



AVERAGE COMMUTE TO WORK

29.3 MINUTES

We should start to see some of the benefits of that in the upcoming fiscal year, and it will be good because it will ensure that there's a dedicated stream of funding for both of those departments.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THE CITY'S FUTURE?

Ultimately what I would like to see happen—and I know it's a very careful balance and one we always strive to keep in mind—I would love to see Jersey Village continue to grow without it being super apparent. There are some areas where the growth comes, and it just hits the community in ways that they're not quite prepared for.

People here really love the fact that we have a little slice of Americana that's hard to find this close to a major metropolitan area. If we can continue to provide amenities and businesses that they can visit while maintaining that character, that would be the best of all possible solutions.

DO YOU ANTICIPATE ANY NOTABLE CHALLENGES IN THIS ROLE?

One of the biggest challenges throughout any issue we face in this city is reassuring people that we can tackle those challenges in an adequate manner while not upsetting what has been built here in terms of community, the fabric of this place.

When creative solutions get proposed, one of the biggest challenges, besides actually executing that creative solution, is also convincing people that it is in the best interest of the community, that we are going to preserve all the things that are important to them while moving forward with that solution.

Just as we're asking people to have an open mind and think beyond just what they've known Jersey Village to be, we also as a council have to be open minded as to some of the concerns and issues that maybe we didn't think of when we put forward an idea and to make adjustments as needed.

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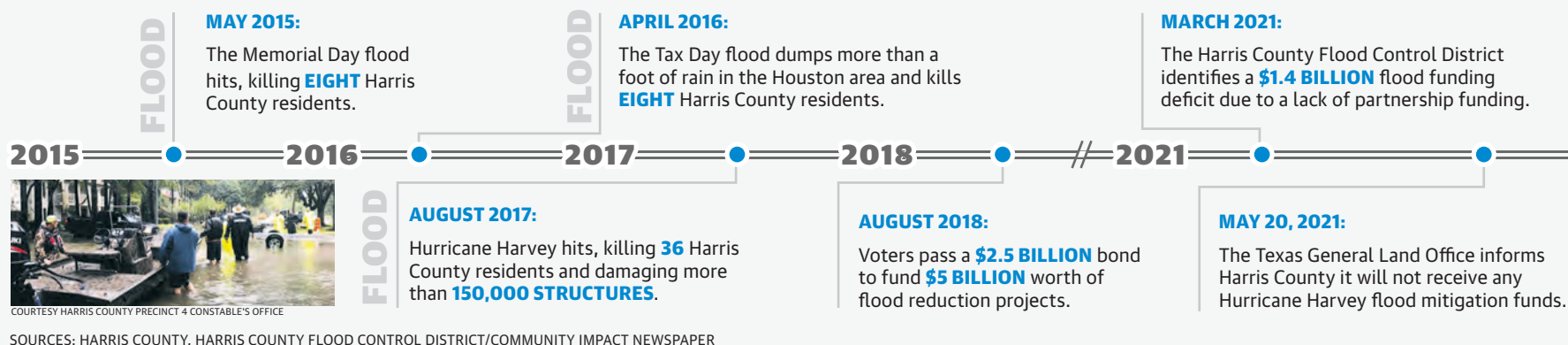
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THE FIGHT FOR **FLOOD FUNDS**

Chronic flooding in Cypress Creek led to the need for billions of dollars in water detention projects, but the path to full funding has been rocky.



CONTINUED FROM 1

service in the watershed has been improved over the past three years.”

Experts recommend the district add at least 25,000 acre-feet—about 8.15 billion gallons—of stormwater detention to the Cypress Creek watershed to alleviate the area’s chronic flooding issues. By comparison, HCFCD has constructed about 50,000 acre-feet of detention countywide since the district was established in 1937, and the Tax Day Flood of April 2016 dumped about 240 billion gallons of water on Harris County over two days.

While the HCFCD will still need to obtain billions of dollars to protect the county from severe flood events, district officials said they will not require additional money for years. Despite funding obstacles, officials said bond projects in the Cypress Creek watershed are all funded and underway. Four years after Harvey, all 181 bond projects have been initiated; 27 projects have been completed; and 660 home buyouts have been completed.

The funding puzzle

After failing to receive an anticipated \$1 billion in federal flood mitigation funding from other sources, HCFCD identified a \$1.4 billion deficit in matching funds largely needed for its bond projects in March. As of late July, the district sits at a \$68 million deficit as it seeks additional partner funding.

“The bond program, we thought when we first started, was going to take 15 years to finish,” Zeve said. “We’re trying to compress it down to 10 years,

but it may take longer. But we don’t need every single dollar today.”

However, an estimated \$35 billion is needed to protect Harris County from severe flooding events, according to Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner Jack Cagle.

To address project finances, Zeve said the funding may come from myriad sources, one of which could be a \$750 million allocation through the Texas General Land Office. After informing Harris County and the city of Houston the entities would not receive any Hurricane Harvey flood mitigation funds in May, public pushback prompted the GLO to request a \$750 million direct allocation to Harris County. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development denied this request in June.

Brittany Eck, GLO director of communications, said the GLO is proposing to subaward \$750 million to Harris County and expects HUD’s response by October. The subaward would require the GLO to oversee projects to ensure they follow HUD guidelines, such as ensuring 50% of the funds go to help lower- to moderate-income residents, Eck said.

If more money does not become available, the Flood Resilience Trust—which the Harris County Commissioners Court created June 29—will fund projects with the \$833 million it will build in its reserves over the next nine years. The Harris County Toll Road Authority will contribute \$40 million annually to the trust to support flood mitigation projects that also include transportation aspects. Zeve said most projects in the Cypress Creek watershed also incorporate transportation.

Property tax tweaks could also provide extra funding. Each year, property tax collections allocate \$120 million to HCFCD, Cagle said. In the current fiscal year 2020-21, the overall county tax rate is set at \$0.59 per \$100 valuation, with HCFCD receiving \$0.03 of that revenue.

NO SINGLE PROJECT OR EVEN GROUP OF PROJECTS WILL MITIGATE ALL FLOOD RISK FOR AN AREA.

MATT ZEVE, HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Decreasing tax funds to one agency would allow an increase for HCFCD without increasing the overall tax rate, said Joe Stinebaker, the director of communications for Cagle’s office.

“With a lot of assumptions in place, I will probably be supportive of thus increasing the amount of the budget in flood control,” Cagle said.

Stinebaker said he anticipates the Harris County Commissioners Court will vote on final property tax rates for fiscal year 2021-22 in September.

As of August, Lucinda Silva, Harris County budget management director for agenda and administration, said in an email the commissioners court is not aware of a second flood bond proposal.

“Probably anywhere from a year or more away, we

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MAY 26, 2021:

GLO Commissioner George P. Bush requests a **\$750 MILLION** direct allocation to Harris County for flood mitigation efforts from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

JUNE 14, 2021:

HUD denies the GLO's request.

JUNE 17, 2021:

Bush announces plans to subaward **\$750 MILLION** to Harris County.

JULY 29, 2021:

The HCFCD funding deficit sits at **\$68 MILLION** after the district acquires additional partner funds.

DANICA LLOYD/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER



JUNE 11, 2021:

Harris County asks HUD to ensure Bush formally requests the **\$750 MILLION** in funds within **30 DAYS**; HCFCD Executive Director Russ Poppe announces his resignation.

JUNE 29, 2021:

Harris County Commissioners Court creates the Flood Resilience Trust, which will collect **\$833 MILLION** in funds to support flooding projects over the next nine years; HCFCD Director of Operations Alan Black is appointed the district's interim executive director until a permanent replacement is hired.

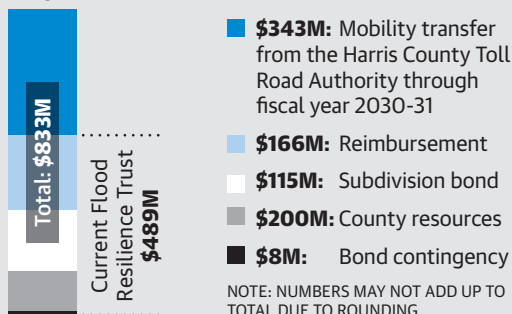
AUG. 9, 2021:

Harris County Commissioners Court has preliminary discussion on fiscal year 2021-22 tax rates.

THE ROAD TO \$833 MILLION

Over the next nine years, the Flood Resilience Trust will collect \$833 million to fund projects as needed.

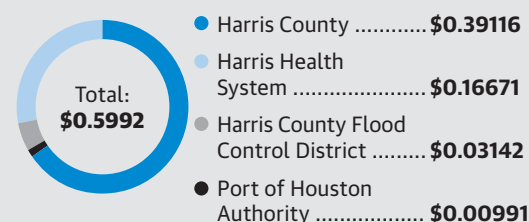
Proposed Flood Resilience Trust



PRIORITIZING PROPERTY TAXES

Precinct 4 Commissioner Jack Cagle said internal tax tweaks in fiscal year 2021-22 could increase countywide flood mitigation project funding without increasing the county's overall tax rate. Under the current tax rate structure, the HCFCD receives about \$120 million annually, Cagle said.

Property tax rates for fiscal year 2020-21



will need funding to complete the projects," Zeve said. "But we have time before we get to that point."

Project progress

The 2018 bond included 12 flood mitigation projects in the Cypress Creek watershed totaling nearly \$288.5 million that are fully funded and underway, Zeve said.

The district plans to build nearly 20 additional stormwater detention basins in the Cypress Creek watershed, with the potential to add nearly 14,000 acre-feet of stormwater detention. However, this number is subject to change as Zeve said the HCFCD has not determined the costs or funding sources for all the detention basins. The 2018 bond does include funds for land acquisition.

The district anticipates construction to be complete on all detention basins over the next decade, dependent on funding. Part of a \$1 million project completed in early 2020 investigated the potential benefits of expanding the Cypress Park stormwater detention basin near the point where Cypress Creek meets Little Cypress Creek. The study recommended a major expansion of this detention basin that would help reduce flooding risk for nearly 1,600 homes in the watershed. HCFCD will move forward as funding allows, according to district documents. A future project will investigate a stormwater detention basin along Faulkey Gully in Cypress.

In addition to detention basins, HCFCD has several subdivision drainage improvement projects underway in the watershed. Zeve said these bond-funded projects will allow water to travel from

neighborhoods through drainage systems and ultimately into Cypress Creek more efficiently.

Local neighborhoods identified for this work include Riata Ranch, Barker Lake, Timberlake Estates, Ravensway, Cypress Creek Estates, Tower Oaks Plaza and other flood-prone communities.

Additionally, HCFCD plans to release Phase 2 studies on the potential for an underground flood tunnel in the Cypress Creek watershed in September for community review. If approved, Zeve said the project could take five to six years if the HCFCD can secure the billions of dollars needed for construction.

"If we build just one of these tunnels, it'll be a massive, massive project," Zeve said. "Probably the biggest project that we'll ever undertake."

Cagle said of the county's 23 watersheds, the 2018 bond allocated 10% of funds to Cypress Creek. While

members of local grassroots organizations such as Cypress Creek Association—Stop the Flooding said they are happy to see progress being made, more funding will be needed to holistically address chronic flooding in the watershed.

"We're happy to see the start, finally, of the big repair work that's happening; we're happy to see them catching up on repairs that are decades overdue," said Paul Eschenfelder, the founder of Cypress Creek Association—Stop the Flooding. "But still, we're having this problem with the funding because the flood bond did not properly address the Cypress Creek area."

Danica Lloyd contributed to this report.



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FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

Students in Cy-Fair ISD have options when it comes to furthering their education for little to no cost. These are some of the options CFISD students have when deciding their potential career paths.

SOURCE: CY-FAIR ISD/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER



ANIMAL SCIENCE

Students can learn the principles of agriculture, small-animal management, veterinary medical studies, livestock production and advanced animal science.

POTENTIAL CAREERS AND SALARY:

- Certified veterinary assistant: **\$15 an hour**
- Animal breeder: **\$39,135**
- Animal scientist: **\$57,533**
- Zoologist: **\$67,309**
- Veterinarian: **\$93,496**

AUTOMOTIVE TECHNICIAN

Students can learn the basics and get hands-on experience in the field.

POTENTIAL CAREERS AND SALARY:

- Automotive service technician/mechanic: **\$39,000**

HEALTH SCIENCE

The health science program offers four options: health care diagnosis, therapeutic, nursing science and health informatics.

POTENTIAL CAREERS AND SALARY:

- Medical assistant: **\$30,000**
- Diagnostic medical sonographer: **\$70,000**
- Pharmacist: **\$121,000**
- Physician and surgeon: **\$213,000**
- Registered nurse: **\$67,000**
- Nurse practitioner: **\$108,000**
- Informatics nurse specialist: **\$88,000**
- Nurse anesthetist: **\$155,000**
- Medical/health service manager: **\$58,000**



PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES

Local entities have assisted students with college and career readiness by covering the fees that may be associated with classes and examinations.

SOURCES: CY-HOPE, CY-FAIR ISD, LONE STAR COLLEGE SYSTEM/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

- **CY-HOPE** has provided **12,140 students** with **\$607,859** in financial assistance since 2012 through its Providing Opportunities Program.
- **CY-FAIR ISD** students received **\$41,819** in reimbursements this summer from the state for the cost of certification exams.
- **LONE STAR COLLEGE SYSTEM** provides Texas public education grants for individuals based on need for continuing education. Some eligible programs may be partially funded based on need.



CONTINUED FROM 1

strategic project manager at Workforce Solutions.

Additionally, students can earn CTE certifications and begin careers quicker than a traditional four-year degree, said Connor O'Sullivan, executive director of continuing education at Lone Star College System. The continuing education program saw a 13.5% increase in student enrollment from 2019-20 to 2020-21, O'Sullivan said. He attributed the increase to individuals looking to find new pathways or help support their families through the pandemic.

"Something like this really drives people to seek that new opportunity," he said.

Meanwhile, more than 30,000 students are enrolled in CTE courses each year in Cy-Fair ISD, according to Chief Academic Officer Linda Macias. CFISD CTE offerings are geared toward all students, whether their next steps include going straight into the workforce or heading to a four-year university, she said.

With more than 30 programs offered, students prepare for certification exams using industry-standard software and equipment for little or no cost through the district's CTE courses, which save students hundreds or even thousands of dollars depending on their desired certifications, district officials said.

"Regardless of a student's plans beyond high school, every student will have a career," Macias said. "It is our [duty] to ensure every student in CFISD has the potential to leave high school with a jumpstart on what comes next."

Bogany said students do not have to earn four-year degrees to have quality careers. Employers are looking for adaptable individuals with quality soft skills who can work well on a team, she said.

Because Cy-Fair's economy is diverse, there are many opportunities for employment, she said.

"I think that employers are ready to hire, and they want to hire people again who are just ready to bring those fresh ideas and ready to jump all in," Bogany said.

Why CTE

Because CTE programs do not require students to attend four years of college, many students see this as a better option for their education, O'Sullivan said. The program in highest demand at the college system is

truck driving, in which students can earn at least \$50,000 straight out of the program. The college system reported a 97% hiring rate for those students.

Some programs at LSC can be completed in a matter of weeks, O'Sullivan said. Additionally, he said the price of receiving a certification is about 10% of the cost for a state university program.

"The return on their investment is just outstanding," he said.

LSC's nursing certification is one of the most popular programs and costs \$1,400 on average. A bookkeeping certification designed for individuals who want to learn basics in Excel accounting or QuickBooks costs students about \$1,900.

Even if an interested student already has a degree or a full-time job, individuals can pursue these certifications to pick up new skills in hopes of getting promoted, O'Sullivan said. LSC's average student is in their mid-30s.

Another popular program at LSC-CyFair is learning software such as Autodesk or Solidworks, which are software and computer programs students can use in their industries. Businesses that may have lost employees during the pandemic can look to these programs to get more employees certified and retain better-skilled workers, O'Sullivan said.

"When they look to hire somebody, they save on training costs. They don't have to retrain them to do what they want to do, and overall I think it's going to attract more businesses to Cy-Fair the better the workforce is," he said.

Community benefits

Businesses in Cy-Fair, such as Elite Auto Experts on FM 529, have benefited from CTE program graduates. Owner Moufid Rabieh said he looks at local students earning certifications to identify future employees.

"I noticed some people, honestly, the ones that have even the two years [of education] ... that are above and beyond the people that have four years," Rabieh said.

After being affected by the pandemic for months, he said his business is experiencing a worker shortage. Rabieh said he would like to see more students pursuing these career paths and more investment in them from the community.

Joann Vo, a 2021 Jersey Village High School graduate, completed her nursing aide certification through LSC-Cy-Fair in December. She said learning through a pandemic was challenging, but she learned how to help patients with basic tasks.

THE PRICE TO PAY

The cost of Lone Star College certifications varies depending on the student's desired career. See the average costs of its most popular certification programs below.

SOURCE: LONE STAR COLLEGE SYSTEM/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER



NURSING

COST: \$1.4K

Students pursuing nursing assistant and other related certifications get firsthand experience with simulation equipment and in laboratories.

POTENTIAL CAREERS AND SALARY:

- Licensed practical and vocational nurse: **\$48,980**
- Nursing assistant: **\$28,607**

COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE

COST: \$1.4K

Aspiring truck drivers learn about mechanical, safety, and emergency equipment and how to follow appropriate safety procedures for transporting dangerous goods.

POTENTIAL CAREERS AND SALARY:

- Heavy and tractor-trailer truck driver: **\$46,186**
- Delivery service driver: **\$37,374**

TEACHING INTERNSHIP

COST: \$4K

As students prepare for their Texas teacher certification exams, they learn how to set their future classrooms up for success.

POTENTIAL CAREERS AND SALARY:

- Preschool teacher: **\$41,090**
- K-12 teacher: **\$59,572**

This semester, Vo will be bringing those skills with her as she attends The University of Texas at San Antonio to pursue her nursing career. Vo said she believes more students should take the opportunity to get certified before entering college because it helps put them ahead of their peers.

"I want to be a nurse, so I basically know the ... basics of everything," she said. "So I feel confident going into what I'm going into."

Financing education

CTE programs are offered at little or no cost to CFISD students, according to Macias.

Students interested in earning their cosmetology operator's license, for example, pay \$300 over four years of cosmetology courses in CFISD versus the average \$14,000 cost of cosmetology programs in Texas.

Further cost savings come in the form of state reimbursements to students who earn certain certifications, Macias said. CFISD students received \$41,819 this summer in reimbursements from the state.

To increase accessibility, local nonprofit Cy-Hope implemented the Providing Opportunities Program in 2012 to cover fees for underserved students taking college credit courses

and pursuing CTE certifications, Executive Director Lynda Zelenka said.

As of summer 2021, the POP has provided 12,140 students with \$607,859 in financial assistance for college and career readiness, including \$32,070 in CTE-related expenses for 405 students, Zelenka said.

"It's really exciting to see where they will go from here just because you help them get the skills that were needed," she said. "And who knows? They might become your auto mechanic."

Mikala Owen, a Cypress Creek High School student, completed a veterinary assistant certification this year and received a grant through Cy-Hope to cover costs, according to CFISD officials. This included completing 1,000 hours of practical work at Lakewood Forest Veterinary Hospital in Cy-Fair.

"There's one coworker who's trying to get this certification or something similar, and when I talk to her, she tells me how she wished she could have done this in high school," Owen said. "It definitely helped being able to get this now instead of starting my career without it."



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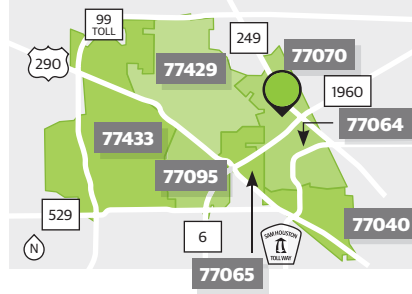
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HUNTERWOOD FOREST, 77070

Hunterwood Forest is a neighborhood of 581 single-family homes located near the intersection of Louetta and Grant roads. It is zoned to Cy-Fair ISD and a short drive from local restaurants, shops and parks.



Median home value
\$229,814

Homes on the market*
2

Homes under contract
5

Median annual property taxes
\$5,630

Median price per square foot
\$97.61

Average days on the market*
7

Build-out year: 1982
Median square footage: 2,618
Neighborhood value range: \$187,000-\$269,000
HOA dues (estimated): \$650 annually
Schools (Cy-Fair ISD): Hamilton Elementary School, Hamilton Middle School, Cypress Creek High School
Property taxes (in dollars):
Lone Star College System 0.11
Harris County 0.39
Harris County Dept. of Education 0.01
Harris County Flood Control District 0.03
Harris Health System 0.17
Cy-Fair ISD 1.36
Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 18 0.37
Port of Houston Authority 0.01
Total (per \$100 valuation) **2.45***
**EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT TAX RATES NOT INCLUDED

NEIGHBORHOOD DATA PROVIDED BY THE BAKER-FOREMAN TEAM
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MBAKER@PREPROPERTIES.COM
TRACY.FOREMAN@PREPROPERTIES.COM



*AS OF AUG. 1

Recently sold homes in Hunterwood Forest



12134 Rocky Lake Drive

5 bed/3.5 bath 3,571 sq. ft.
Sold for \$370,001-\$420,000 on Aug. 6



14803 Long Oak Drive

4-5 bed/2.5 bath 2,733 sq. ft.
Sold for \$325,001-\$370,000 on June 28



14603 Rosehill Drive

4 bed/2.5 bath 3,214 sq. ft.
Sold for \$325,001-\$370,000 on July 21



12506 Oakcroft Drive

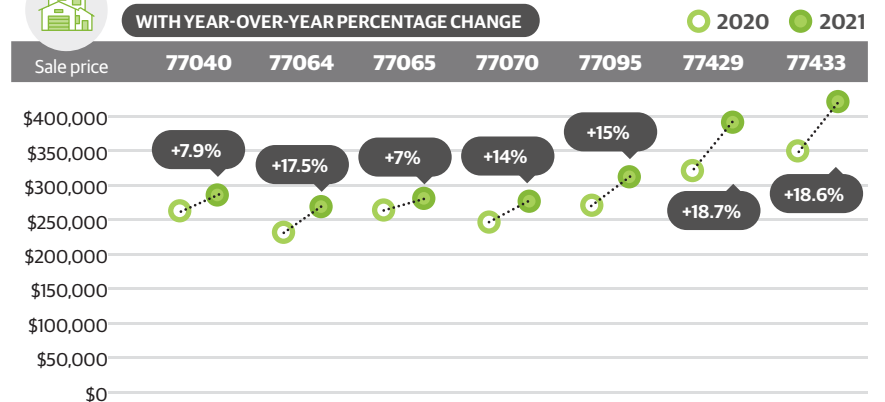
4 bed/3.5 bath 3,216 sq. ft.
Sold for \$285,001-\$325,000 on June 15

MARKET DATA FOR JULY

HOMES SOLD/AVERAGE DAYS ON THE MARKET

	77040	77064	77065	77070	77095	77429	77433
\$149,999 or under	1/1	-	1/18	1/15	-	-	1/4
\$150,000-\$199,999	4/8	6/6	3/2	2/2	3/9	2/1	3/7
\$200,000-\$299,999	10/11	16/9	23/8	41/11	51/6	62/6	57/8
\$300,000-\$399,999	9/8	8/10	8/19	10/6	41/10	68/7	70/23
\$400,000-\$499,999	1/15	1/7	2/25	1/13	9/9	36/7	53/29
\$500,000-\$599,999	1/15	-	-	-	1/5	11/28/	28/20
\$600,000-\$799,999	-	-	-	-	-	12/13	20/11
\$800,000-\$999,999	-	-	-	1/124	-	2/76	8/32
\$1 million+	-	-	-	-	-	3/4	-

MEDIAN PRICE OF HOMES SOLD WITH YEAR-OVER-YEAR PERCENTAGE CHANGE



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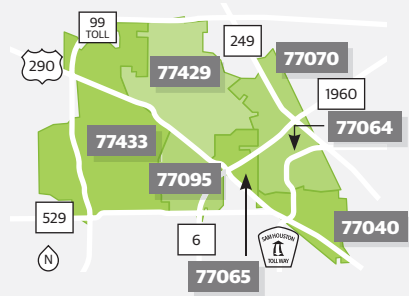
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AUGUST 2021

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE DATA

After dropping slightly between the first and second quarters of the year, Cy-Fair's industrial rental rates are back up with more than 1.7 million square feet of space under construction. Both retail and office rental rates took a dip over the previous month. While retail occupancy is about the same as it was at this time last year, office vacancies have risen to 21.6%.

TOTAL SQUARE FEET OF SPACE

Q3 2020 As of Aug. 23

OFFICE

10.57M

10.67M

INDUSTRIAL

39.54M

40.21M

RETAIL

19.87M

20.19M



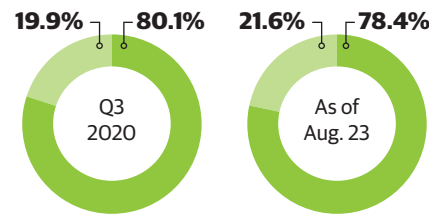
MARKET DATA PROVIDED BY CALDWELL COS.
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Although every effort has been made to ensure the timeliness and accuracy of this real estate data, Community Impact Newspaper assumes no liability for errors or omissions.

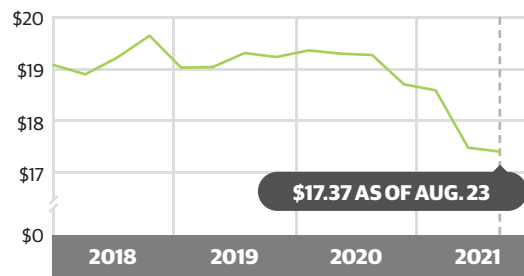
OFFICE

OCCUPANCY VS. VACANCY

Occupancy rate Vacancy rate



RENTAL RATES PER SQUARE FOOT



UNDER CONSTRUCTION

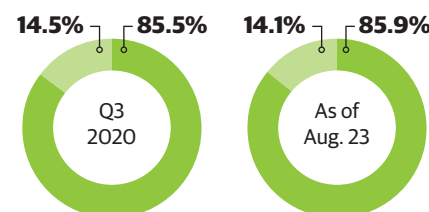
177,204 square feet

3 buildings

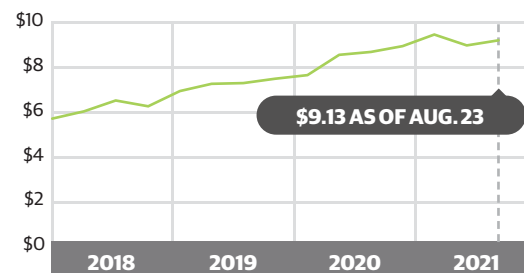
INDUSTRIAL

OCCUPANCY VS. VACANCY

Occupancy rate Vacancy rate



RENTAL RATES PER SQUARE FOOT



UNDER CONSTRUCTION

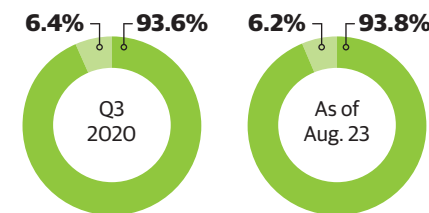
1.72M square feet

8 buildings

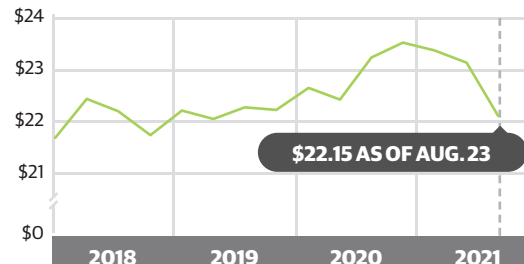
RETAIL

OCCUPANCY VS. VACANCY

Occupancy rate Vacancy rate



RENTAL RATES PER SQUARE FOOT



UNDER CONSTRUCTION

64,103 square feet

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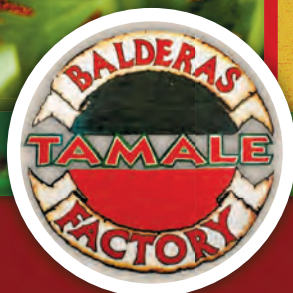
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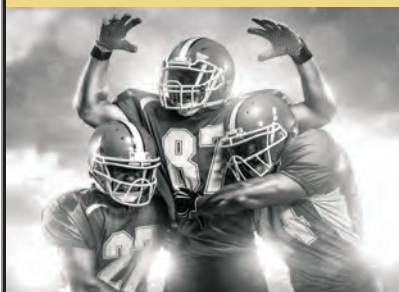
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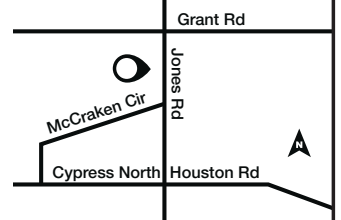
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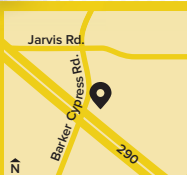
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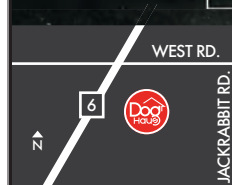
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CALENDAR

OKTOBERFEST BEER DINNER
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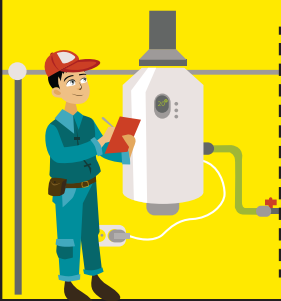


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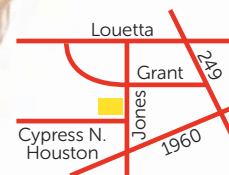


**Custard is
better!**

50% OFF

**Buy any item* and
get the second item
at 50% off**

*Any item except pints, quarts, pies and brownies and
get the second item of equal or less value at 50% off.
Discounted item must be purchased at time of regular
priced item. One coupon per visit. Offer expires 10/15/21



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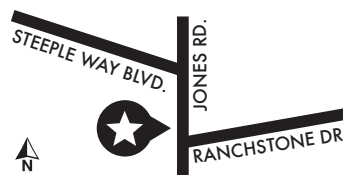
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KIDS EAT FREE**
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With adult meal purchase. Must
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per table. Not valid with any other
offers. Valid at Cypress location only.
Exp 10/4/21

**BUY ONE ENTREE
GET ONE
50% OFF**

With purchase of two drinks, \$9 max
value, cannot be combined with any
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Up to \$8 Value. One coupon per
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\$3.00
House Sake, House Wine,
and Beer





**Baylor St. Luke's
Medical Center**

Baylor
College of
Medicine

Caring for the Caregivers

These are challenging times for Greater Houston communities contending with yet another wave of COVID-19. The serious illness and loss of life is a tragedy for affected families, and it is taking a physical and emotional toll on medical professionals.

As CEO of St. Luke's Health, which includes Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center (the research and teaching hospital for Baylor College of Medicine) and St. Joseph Health in Brazos Valley, I am seeing the number of patients with the coronavirus grow each day.

Per data from the Texas state epidemiologist, 75% of new COVID-19 cases are reported to be a result of the highly transmissible Delta variant. The average age for admission in our hospitals has dropped by approximately 15 years, making 40-45 the age range most affected.

While we've learned from the past COVID-19 surges, the Delta variant poses new challenges to our critical safety net, impacting both the cost of providing care and the number of doctors and nurses needed to staff hospitals.

Last year, nearly 21,000 healthcare providers responded to the American Medical Association's COVID-19 for Caregivers Survey. The respondents cited that coping with the fear of exposing themselves and their families to disease, as well as constant work overloads and burnout, are all part of their daily routines.

The stress of working during a pandemic has caused many to retire early or leave the healthcare profession entirely. The result is that there are shortages in critical areas, such as nursing, and the overall cost of maintaining our hospital's labor force has increased dramatically.

We are actively working with our insurance companies regarding this escalating cost of providing healthcare and I remain hopeful that we will be able to partner with the payor community to ensure that we are paid fairly for this important work and continue to be in the best position to provide high value care to the communities that we serve.

Our patients are the reason we come to work every day. Providing them with exceptional care is a responsibility we welcome and one that we will always honor as we work to ensure the trust of St. Luke's Health is the best place to give and receive care and while I am always willing to talk about our caregivers and the best-value care and essential services they provide, it is very nice when someone else will do that for you.

Each year, *U.S. News and World Report* reports on the nation's best hospitals and best specialties. Last week, the magazine recognized Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center (Baylor St. Luke's) as a Best Hospital nationally for 2021-22. For the 2021-22 rankings and ratings, *U.S. News* evaluated more than 4,750 medical centers nationwide.

Additionally, Baylor St. Luke's was ranked nationally in the following specialties:

- » Cancer (The Dan L Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center), No. 25
- » Cardiology & Heart Surgery, No. 13 nationally and **top-ranked** in Houston
- » Gastroenterology & GI Surgery, No. 24
- » Geriatrics, No. 46
- » Neurology & Neurosurgery, No. 33

Of course, I am proud of the *U.S. News and World Report* recognition, yet I am even more proud of what we are doing at St. Luke's to make a positive impact on the health and well-being of our friends and neighbors. And we will continue to do so years into the future.



T. Douglas Lawson

T. Douglas Lawson
CEO, St. Luke's Health



St. Luke's Health comprises 16 hospitals located in Houston, Bryan/College Station, and East Texas, including the renowned Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center (BSLMC). BSLMC is an academic health center providing quaternary care. We are a non-profit health system guided by our values of Compassion, Inclusion, Integrity, Excellence, and Collaboration.