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Southwest Texas BUSINESS JOURNAL

Serving Jefferson, Orange & Hardin Counties, Texas

Arbor Renewable Gas selects Beaumont site for estimated \$1 billion investment

Arbor Renewable Gas announced Nov. 17 that, with the help of local consulting firm Griffith Moseley Johnson (GMJ Inc.), it has selected a 53-acre site in Beaumont to build its first renewable gasoline plant, a potential \$1 billion investment, according to Arbor Gas CEO Timothy Vail.

The “Spindletop Plant” site is located on the Beaumont-Nederland border and was selected for “its access to critical infrastructure and feedstock as well as a talented and experienced workforce, along with longstanding community support for modern fuel plants,” Arbor reports.

The plant will produce approximately 1,000 barrels per day of high-quality, environmentally responsible “drop-in” renewable gasoline for sale into the renewable fuels marketplace. The gasoline will be produced from woody biomass generated from the East Texas woodshed in compliance



Arbor Renewable Gas plans to use biomass, like these wood chips, to produce fuel.



Vail

with the EPA rules under the Renewable Fuel Standard. Once produced, the gasoline will be shipped to consumers that require the fuel under the Low Carbon Fuel

Standard.

“The Arbor Gas team is extremely excited to build its first plant in the city of Beaumont,” said Vail. “Both the

See ARBOR on page 4

Lamar University, ExxonMobil launch Cardinal NEST at Amelia Elementary

With the latest Cardinal NEST opening at Amelia Elementary School on Nov. 30, even more of a growing number of Beaumont students have the opportunity to benefit from a safe learning space designed to encourage STEAM education, brimming with activities focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math.

Lamar University (LU) and ExxonMobil have officially opened the Cardinal NEST (Navigating Excellence Success and Triumph)

at Amelia Elementary, which joins Pietzsch-MacArthur, Blanchette, Charlton-Pollard, Martin, Regina Howell, Homer, Guess and Fletcher as Beaumont ISD NEST campuses.

Cardinal NEST learning labs include state-of-the-art technology like Clear Touch, multi-touch panels with tilting stands and computers loaded with STEAM-related software, snowflake software that includes more than 150,000 K-12,

See NEST on page 8



Robert C. Dunn, president, Beaumont ISD Board; Dr. Jaime Taylor, president, Lamar University; Rozena Dendy, ExxonMobil Beaumont Refinery Manager; Big Red, Lamar University mascot; Yvonne DuPont, principal, Amelia Elementary; Dr. Shannon Allen, superintendent, Beaumont ISD; Jennifer Dunphy, ExxonMobil Beaumont Chemical Plant Manager; and Karl Krotzer, ExxonMobil Beaumont Polyethylene Plant Manager get ready to cut the ribbon on the new Cardinal NEST at Amelia Elementary School.

Entergy Texas offers tips to help save energy this winter

The first taste of cool weather is always welcome in Southeast Texas following the stifling heat of summer, Entergy Texas asserts. With winter fast approaching and news of higher natural gas prices, customers may be concerned about the effect of winter temperatures on their energy bill.



When it comes to higher energy bills, it's important to remember that usage and weather have a significant impact on energy bills during warmer or colder months. In fact, heating and cooling costs can account for as much as 55% of a customer's monthly energy usage. The bigger the difference between inside and outside temperatures and the more consecutive days of higher or lower temperatures, the more energy customers use, which results in higher bills.

In addition to increased energy usage during the winter months, worldwide conditions have resulted in increases in the cost of natural gas, and customers could see an impact on their electricity bill.

To break it down, Entergy Texas charges residential customers a fixed fuel rate for the energy they use. The fixed fuel rate is adjusted semi-annually through filings each February and August using a formula approved and reviewed by the Public Utility Commission of Texas. That formula averages Entergy Texas' fuel costs over the most recent 12 months, which reduces the volatility of immediate impacts to customers when there are short-term spikes in fuel prices. However, given the increase in natural gas prices over the past several months and that higher prices are expected to continue through the winter, customers should ready their homes and businesses for winter weather and prepare for higher electricity bills.

Knowing about the potential for bill increases due to higher gas prices and increased usage during colder

months, customers can take steps today to prepare for winter. Here are a few tips to help save energy and money this winter:

Call a pro. Contact a qualified professional to clean and inspect your heating system before the start of winter.

Replace air filters. Dirty filters make your heating system work harder. Replace them regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Weatherize doors and windows. Examine windows and exterior doors for air leaks and seal them with caulk or weatherstripping.

Close the gaps. Check for gaps around exterior plumbing and wiring in your attic. Seal them with caulk or foam insulation.

Seal air ducts. Look for holes or poor connections in accessible ductwork and seal with mastic tape. Insulate any ducts in conditioned areas, such as a garage or crawlspace.

Install a programmable thermostat. Programmable thermostats automatically lower temperatures at night or when you're not at home.

Adjust your thermostat. Every degree above 68 on the thermostat can increase your bill by about 3%. So, if you crank it up to a toasty 78 degrees, you've already added 30% to your bill.

Monitor your usage. Customers can access detailed energy usage information through their online account, including daily usage information.

Energy usage is updated several times daily, with displayed usage in 15-minute increments for customers. Through proactive alerting, customers can set a monthly budget and energy use goals and receive notifications when nearing the selected goal. Visit entergy.com/myadvisor and sign in to your account to check it out.

Entergy Texas has a number of bill-payment options for those needing help paying their energy bills, including payment extensions, deferred payment arrangements and level billing. Entergy Texas also helps seniors and disabled individuals in crisis through its customer-assistance fund, The Power to Care, which is funded by donations from Entergy employees, customers and shareholders. In addition to The Power to Care, bill-payment assistance also is available through the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. For more information on bill payment options and assistance, visit www.entergy-texas.com/bill-help/.

About Entergy Texas

Entergy Texas Inc. provides electricity to approximately 473,000 customers in 27 counties. Entergy Texas is a subsidiary of Entergy Corporation, an integrated energy company engaged in electric power production, transmission and retail distribution operations. Entergy delivers electricity to 3 million utility customers in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. Entergy owns and operates "one of the cleanest large-scale U.S. power generating fleets," the company reports, with approximately 30,000 megawatts of electric generating capacity, including 7,000 megawatts of nuclear power. Headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana, Entergy has annual revenues of \$10 billion and approximately 12,500 employees. Learn more at entergy.com and follow @Entergy on social media.

BUSINESS JOURNAL

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The Examiner Corporation

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Beaumont, TX 77701

(409) 832-1400

Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm, or corporation which may occur in Business Journal will be gladly corrected upon being brought to the attention of the editor.

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a wonderful holiday
season.



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ExxonMobil

city of Beaumont and Jefferson County have been very welcoming and supportive of our development efforts.”

As founder and former CEO of G2X Energy Inc., Vail has invested locally before, when the company built the Natgasoline plant, a world-scale methanol production facility located in Beaumont. In an interview with the Southeast Texas Business Journal on Nov. 22, Vail said he raised the capital to build the plant, which, the company touts, is now “the most efficient and largest methanol production facility in the U.S., producing over 1.7 million metric tons per year.”

“That was me,” he explained. “I raised the money and built that project, then sold it to a major investor in 2018.”

Vail has extensive experience in the energy sector and says Southeast Texas has a great business climate and excellent training opportunities, as well as attractive incentives for new businesses. He and business partner John G. Kennedy III, who has been in investment banking for 30-plus years, both have “a long history in the refining and petrochemical world,” and founded Arbor Renewable Gas in 2019 to create a more environmentally efficient fuel that would act as a transitional gasoline for consumers who are not ready or cannot feasibly make the switch to electricity-powered transports.

“John and I have been developing a whole host of different technologies and plants over the decades, but we wanted to try to get on the other side of the equation. We formed Arbor Renewable Gas specifically to get us on the other side of the hydrocarbon equation,” Vail explained. “So, we took a strong look at all the different technologies and what we knew and who we knew, and we decided on this negative carbon gasoline as the approach to take, for a number of reasons.

“One, the technology is proven. It’s never been put together exactly the way we’re doing it, so we technically have a first-of-its-kind plan. But the various components of that, I’ve built and operated in the past.

“Also, there’s ample supply of our feedstock in East Texas wood. We work with a couple of great companies out of Woodville, right north of Beaumont, and so we have ample feedstock...

“We launched the company and we’re based out of Houston. We started looking at where do we want to build our first facility and obviously came back to Southeast Texas and Beaumont-Jefferson County, because

we’ve had such good experience there in building Natgasoline, not only from just the city and the state, but also the employee resources have been fantastic. We can get what we need very enthusiastically from the area, and that’s why we ended up choosing the site there in Beaumont.”

Vail explains that the “drop-in” fuel Arbor will be producing at the local facility can be used to replace traditional hydrocarbon-based fuels in gasoline-powered vehicles. Users do not need to have their vehicles modified to use the alternative fuel and can simply pull up to the gas station and “fill it up” as usual when and where the renewable gas is available. And, says Vail, consumers can feel good about making the switch as the renewable gas has a negative carbon intensity score.

“It has such a strong negative carbon score that every mile you drive, we’re actually reducing the CO2 impact,” he asserted. “We are truly a renewable fuels company. What we produce is renewable gasoline and, ultimately, renewable hydrogen. These are products that complement the existing infrastructure of hydrocarbon-based products, and it’s what we call a transition fuel... We want to provide a transition fuel that allows consumers to transition to a low-carbon or renewable gas, so you don’t have to go buy an expensive electric car... You can fill up with Arbor’s gasoline in your normal car and drive it just like you always do, and you’re having a tremendous negative carbon impact... It’s a fuel for everyone who wants to participate.”

“That’s what we’re doing, and I think that’s really what sets Arbor apart,” he continued. “We are focused on renewable fuels. That’s what we do. Our technology is well understood, and we know how to do it. I’ve built these gasifiers before; I’ve built the back-end process. We have all the tools to be able to do that and be a real player in this space.”

Once built, Vail says the commercial facility will be the first of its kind in the world. Arbor will build up the business in phases, he explains. The first train, representing an approximate investment of \$350 million, will produce about 1,000 barrels a day, which is “small in the petrochemical world, but huge in the fact that we will be the first renewable gasoline provider.” He

said plans are to expand the number of trains over time as demand increases.

“You see a lot of renewable diesel and biodiesel. We’re moving into the gasoline space, and we are the first company to do that,” he described. “Others, I’m sure, will follow. But, we’re the first to actually commercially produce renewable gasoline. That’s very exciting for us.”

GMJ Inc. assisted Arbor Renewable Gasoline with site selection for the new facility. Prior to the site selection, Carl Griffith of GMJ said Beaumont was in the running for the project, and had “a really good shot” at edging out a competing site in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, which is what finally happened.

“I think Southeast Texas is in good shape on it. I really do. I think we’ve got a really good shot at it. Louisiana is always hard to compete against on stuff like this. They just are. They do a good job. Our job is to put all the offers together and give them to our client. They make the final decision,” he told *The Business Journal* in July.

“They’re carbon-neutral,” Griffith said of Arbor, “so this goes to the heart of that loud discussion that’s going around the world about those emissions. They actually get carbon credits because of the way that they recapture the CO2.

“There will be 1,000 tons of wood waste a day that won’t go onto the forest floor, and it’s not out of the question that they may be using other waste as they generate additional projects. There’s a chance to build four units here.”

At least one of the future units could utilize landfill waste to generate renewable gas, said Griffith.

“The uniqueness of this project is what it will do for not just our area. Right now, it’s a unique project from anything,” he added. “If we land it in Jefferson County, this is the first project that’s ever been done here, but it’s also the first project of its kind in the country.”

GMJ Vice President of Strategic Alliances Becky Ames says Griffith and the GMJ team, including Vice President and General Counsel John Johnson and Chief Financial Officer Megan Gallien, were instrumental in assisting with the site selection and have worked tirelessly with local and state governments to see the sale through. According to Ames, the firm

is pleased with Arbor’s choice and happy to have brought business to Southeast Texas, where GMJ is headquartered.

“It’s been great working with Arbor and the GMJ team,” said Ames. “We have a group of people that are very good at doing what we do, and we are really proud to be a part of bringing this economic development initiative to Beaumont. We wanted it to happen in our backyard.

“I also have to say, the city of Beaumont, Jefferson County, BISD (Beaumont Independent School District) and all the taxing entities have been great to work with on this project. I really commend all of them for looking at this for what it is and how important it could be for our city and our region. This is wonderful for our five-county area, It’s just a really good project, and they are great people to work with.

“We work all over the nation, all over the world, helping people select sites, wherever they may be looking – but I especially love it when it’s close to home. It’s so great.”

Construction of the Spindletop Plant will commence in the first quarter of 2022 with an expected completion date in late 2023. Commercial production from the facility is expected to begin in early 2024.

“Just as the Spindletop area opened the door to the petroleum revolution in 1901, Arbor Gas and the city of Beaumont are reinventing the way transportation fuels are produced, and decarbonizing transportation fuel for all consumers of gasoline,” said Vail of Arbor.

In addition to the Beaumont site, Arbor Gas has tentatively selected a site in Pasadena for continued later expansion. According to Arbor, the “Red Bluff Road” site is “ideally located in the Bayport industrial district near large consumers of hydrogen. This site offers a unique location to produce renewable hydrogen on an industrial scale with the ability to efficiently transport the product via pipeline directly to end users.”

About Arbor Renewable Gas LLC

Arbor Gas’ mission is “to build and own a portfolio of cost-effective, safe and reliably sourced woody biomass to renewable gasoline and green hydrogen plants around the world,” reports the company. With an initial focus on the Texas and Louisiana Gulf Coast, Arbor Gas is bringing “a unique blend of intellectual capital, technology, financing and project execution skills to successfully advance its vision of a clean, low-carbon transportation fuel utilizing existing infrastructure and vehicles.”

To learn more about the company, visit www.arborgas.com.

– Sharon Brooks



Allegiance, CommunityBank of Texas merge

Allegiance Bancshares Inc. (Allegiance), the holding company of Allegiance Bank, and CBTX Inc. (CBTX), the parent company of CommunityBank of Texas N.A., jointly announced Nov. 8 that they have entered into a definitive agreement pursuant to which the companies will combine in an all-stock merger of equals to create a combined company with an equity market capitalization of approximately \$1.5 billion and the 17th largest deposit market share in the state of Texas.

Under the terms of the definitive merger agreement, Allegiance shareholders will receive 1.4184 shares of CBTX common stock for each share of Allegiance common stock they own. Based on the number of outstanding shares of Allegiance and CBTX as of Nov. 5, Allegiance shareholders will own approximately 54% and CBTX shareholders will own approximately 46% of the combined company.

“We are very excited to partner with CBTX with whom we share culture, strategic vision and a commitment to our stakeholders. This transaction is a true merger of equals, combining the best of our highly-respected community banks which better positions us to serve our customers and drive enhanced financial performance,” said Steve Retzloff, Allegiance’s Chief Executive Officer.

“Our companies complement each other beautifully and the combined company will be a formidable competitor across our markets. The combination is poised to deliver long-term value for our shareholders, customers, employees and communities. I have long admired Bob’s leadership and the high-quality community bank franchise that CBTX has built. I am

thrilled that we will be on the same team and look forward to working closely as, together, we become Texas’ premier community bank,” continued Retzloff.

CBTX Chairman, CEO and President Bob Franklin said, “Bringing two of the Houston region’s best community banks together is a great thing for our communities. Allegiance is a trusted, local bank, and there is no better team with which to unite to work together to preserve the tradition of community banking, while meeting the diverse needs of the customers that we serve.”

Mr. Franklin continued, “I have tremendous respect for Steve and the Allegiance team and look forward to leveraging our respective strengths as we focus on our combined future. We are committed to the idea that the Houston region needs a financial institution with significant scale that operates with the culture of a community bank and local decision making led by banking professionals with deep experience. The combination enhances our ability to deliver for our communities, shareholders, customers and employees in a better way than either company could achieve alone and gives us the ability to compete in the next generation of banking. The combined company will unify under new branding to be identified prior to the completion of the merger. This will be important as we take the best of both to build our future.”

About Allegiance Bancshares, Inc.

As of Sept. 30, Allegiance was a \$6.8 billion asset Houston, Texas-based bank holding company. Through its wholly owned subsidiary, Allegiance Bank, Allegiance provides a diversified range of commercial banking services primarily to small- to medium-sized businesses and individual customers in the Houston region.



Robert R. Franklin, Jr. – CBTX Chairman, President & Chief Executive Officer and J. Pat Parsons – CBTX Vice Chairman of the Board at the NASDAQ stock exchange in 2017.

Allegiance’s super-community banking strategy was designed to foster strong customer relationships while benefiting from a platform and scale that is competitive with larger local and regional banks. As of Sept. 30, Allegiance Bank operated 27 full-service banking locations in the Houston region, which we define as the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land and Beaumont-Port Arthur metropolitan statistical areas. Visit www.allegiancebank.com for more

information.

About CBTX Inc.

CBTX Inc. is the bank holding company for CommunityBank of Texas N.A., a community bank, offering commercial banking solutions to small and mid-sized businesses and professionals in Houston, Dallas, Beaumont and surrounding communities in Texas. Visit www.communitybankoftx.com for more information.

LSCPA Culinary Arts program named best in Texas by online higher ed resource



Ashley Taylor is director of the Lamar State College Port Arthur Culinary Arts and Hospitality program. (Photo by Gerry Dickert/LSCPA Public Information)

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Orange business to donate \$500k for LSCO 'Mechatronics' program

Lamar State College Orange (LSCO) announced Nov. 29 that Cloeren Incorporated, a global leader in supplying tooling for the plastics extrusion industry, has committed to donating over \$500,000 toward the establishment of LSCO's new Mechanical, Manufacturing, and Maintenance, or "Mechatronics," Program. The donation includes an initial \$300,000 worth of machinery, and \$200,000 in scholarship funding over the next four years, to support area students who wish to study this field.

As part of this partnership, Cloeren will donate machinery such as a manual knee-type mill, a CNC mill, a CNC lathe and other equipment that will serve as the basis of study for the program. The company has also committed resources such as steel for in-class project use, cutting tools, cutting fluids and Cloeren staff to provide lectures and instruction for the program's students.

Further, Cloeren has also committed to providing learning opportunities through part-time paid internships for LSCO students who are enrolled in the program.

These students may be considered for future employment at the company upon graduation.

"Cloeren is proud to make this educational investment in the Orange community. As a global mechatronics company, we see the need for a workforce that is well-educated and committed to the advancement of this field. This investment of time, money and training into Lamar State College Orange will further ensure that our area is poised to support the growing workforce demand for mechatronics and ensure that LSCO will be a leader in training future workers in this space in partnership with Cloeren," said Peter Cloeren, CEO of Cloeren Incorporated.

Additionally, one focus of the \$200,000 set aside for scholarship funding will be to encourage gender diversity in the field by training more women to enter the male-dominated industry.

"Certain areas of the mechatronics field are incorrectly stereotyped as male jobs. I believe women can make significant con-



tributions in the field, particularly in the area of CNC machining, programming, and metrology," said Cloeren.

"I believe there is a lot of talent in Southeast Texas that is either untapped or void of opportunity. I see our partnership with LSCO as an investment in our local community for those who may wish to better themselves and their careers; and to also support our nation's ability to remain competitive in this increasingly global marketplace," Cloeren added.

"We at Lamar State College Orange couldn't be more thrilled and grateful to the generosity and vision of Pete Cloeren and the staff at Cloeren. This investment will be a game-changer for our campus in our ability to make our students competitive at a global level in the latest mechatronics industry trends. With Mr. Cloeren's vision, commitment, and partnership, we hope our 'Mechatronics' Program will become the national leader in the education of the future workforce in this field," said LSCO

President Dr. Thomas Johnson.

"I want to thank our Dean of Health, Workforce, and Technical Studies, Kristin Walker, and our Associate Dean of Technical Studies, Dr. Keith Jones, for initiating this partnership. This is an exciting day for LSCO, Orange, and for our nation's workforce," said Dr. Johnson.

The Mechatronics Program will begin accepting students in April 2022 for a Fall 2022 start. An information session about the new program will be held on campus on March 22, 2022. For more information on the program or to learn about enrolling, contact LSCO's Advising Team via email advising@lSCO.edu, phone (409) 882-3340, or by visiting their office on the Third Floor of the Ron Lewis Building.

About Cloeren Incorporated

Cloeren Incorporated is a family-owned business headquartered in Orange. Cloeren is the global leader in the design and manufacture of extrusion tooling used to produce food, medical, and pharmaceutical packaging, personal care products, and other consumer goods. Cloeren operates facilities in Orange; Marshall; Eau Claire, WI; and Micheldorf, Austria; as well as service centers around the globe. In addition, Cloeren has recently ventured into the aerospace industry and is supplying custom made components to exacting tolerances for space flight out of its Orange facilities.



Small Business Assistance

OUR SERVICES

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COVID-19 Support

Lamar State College Port Arthur SBDC provides resources for businesses combatting the challenges of COVID-19. Our advisors and staff assist with SBA loans, grants, contracts, & more.



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We provide one-on-one virtual business advising, training, and resources for Spanish-speaking business owners. Please contact your local SBDC to request a bilingual Business Advisor.



International Trade

Did you know that 95% of the world's consumers live outside of the U.S.? We provide assistance with International Trade, which can open up a world of opportunities for businesses of all sizes.

ExxonMobil and Southeast Texas Food Bank collaborate to fight holiday hunger



ExxonMobil Beaumont employees joined New Day Deliverance Holiness Church Bishop Eldridge C. Charlot Sr., and congregation members to volunteer at this year's Thanksgiving food distribution event with the Southeast Texas Food Bank.

In November, ExxonMobil joined the Southeast Texas Food Bank and New Day Deliverance Holiness Church to distribute holiday food boxes to more than 200 families in advance of Thanksgiving.

Later in the same month, ExxonMobil visited the food bank to provide a \$30,000 contribution for the agency's annual Thanksgiving turkey program, mobile food distribution in the Charlton-Pollard and South Park communities, and the school backpack program

for Charlton-Pollard Elementary students. In 2020, ExxonMobil employees completed more than 500 food distribution and pantry hours, earning the President's Gold Volunteer Service Award.

The Southeast Texas Food Bank works with 130 nonprofit agencies within their eight counties served to supply food for those in need. With worldwide supply chain issues and delays, food product availability and costs are rising, which can make when it may be received unpredictable.

AMERICA'S
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LAMAR STATE COLLEGE

Lamar State College Port Arthur SBDC is responsible for providing small business assistance to the Cities of Port Arthur, Groves, Port Neches, Nederland, Vidor, Orange and Bridge City.

If you're in need of small business assistance, the SBDC advising staff can assist you in various stages of the business life cycle: pre-venture or early stage, startup, expansion, growth and exit.

Lamar State College
Port Arthur SBDC
Lamar State College Port Arthur
1401 Procter
Port Arthur, TX 77640
Phone: (409) 984-6531

Port Arthur unveils new basketball court donated by Sparkling Ice

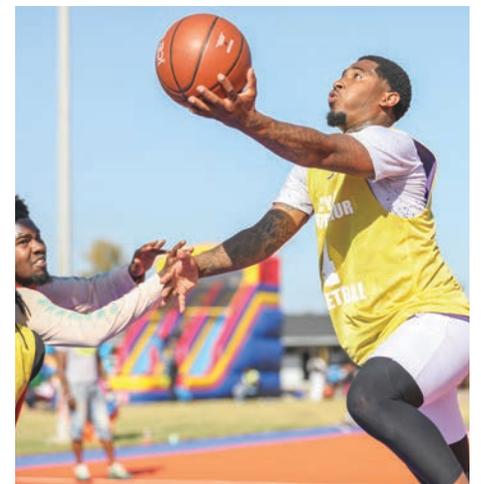
On Saturday, Nov. 20, the community of Port Arthur unveiled a brand-new, refurbished basketball court in partnership with Sparkling Ice, as part of the company's Cheers to You Beautification Project. The plans for the new court feature a fresh overlay of the existing court, all new equipment with new hoops and rims with surrounding swings, picnic tables and benches for the surrounding area. The swings, picnic tables and benches are scheduled to be installed in 2022.

To kick off the event, there was a ribbon-cutting ceremony, welcome

speeches from Port Arthur Mayor Thurman Bartie, former NFL player and Port Arthur native Jordan Babineaux, with attendance from fellow board members and city officials. Following the ribbon-cutting ceremony, there was a basketball tournament featuring eight teams to break in the new court.

The event also featured large inflatables, face painting, balloon twisting, a DJ, snow cones and Southern-style food for the whole family to enjoy and celebrate the opening of the new court at Bryan Park, aka 503 Park, in Port Arthur.

Photos by Leo Weeks Photography



Lamar Institute of Technology dedicates building to ExxonMobil

In December, Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT) dedicated the existing Petrochemical & Advanced Technology Center (PATC) to ExxonMobil in recognition of their longstanding support. The newly renamed "ExxonMobil Petrochemical & Advanced Technology Center" houses technology programs, including process operating and instrumentation.

"We owe a debt of gratitude to our valued community partner, ExxonMobil. Throughout the years, the company has tirelessly contributed to LIT's historic growth through sponsorships, scholarships, job support, mentorship and job placement. We felt it was more than fitting to dedicate this building in ExxonMobil's name," LIT President Dr. Lonnie L. Howard said.

The new name recognizes collaborations between LIT and ExxonMobil dating back to the 1990s, including the company's contributions of over \$1 million in financial, volunteer and equipment, scholarships and sponsorship donations since 2009.

"We are incredibly grateful to our neighbors at LIT for this prestigious



ExxonMobil Beaumont Complex, Refinery, Blending and Packaging Plant, Chemical Plant, Polyethylene Plant and Refinery Expansion Project employees celebrate with Dr. Lonnie L. Howard, LIT President, and Baldy, LIT mascot.

honor," Rozena Dendy, ExxonMobil Beaumont Refinery Manager, said. "It's our honor that next generation of stu-

dents will take advantage of the career training and co-occupational opportunities made possible through LIT."

At the building dedication, ExxonMobil announced a \$40,000 contribution in scholarship funding for the LIT dual credit program with Beaumont Independent School District. The program offers low-cost, dual-enrollment credit opportunities for students at three local Beaumont ISD high schools: Beaumont Early College High School, Beaumont United High School and West Brook High School.

Since 2015, ExxonMobil has contributed more than \$160,000 in funding to help local students to earn credits in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) courses, including process technology and instrumentation technology, while simultaneously earning their high school diploma. Since the collaboration began, more than 800 local students have received funding to

participate in the program.

By studying instrumentation technology, students learn how to manage and maintain high-level equipment used in automated systems essential for operations in chemical plants, petrochemical refineries and other industrial settings.



When YOU think of buying or selling a business, think Sunbelt Business Brokers



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Amelia's cheer squad and spirit team welcome guests to celebrate the school's new Cardinal NEST.

NEST

from page 1

STEAM-related lesson plans, digital citizenship material and software, and virtual reality programs and equipment.

"These are creative, unique and innovative learning spaces that cultivate a college-going culture," said Teresa Simpson, executive director of the LU Office of Community Relations, Economic Development and Student Ac-

cess. "These labs seek to spark the love of learning and enhance the academic performance of the students in the areas of STEAM."

Simpson addressed students at the pep rally, explaining to them the purpose of the new space and how it may be used to augment classroom learning.

"What is a Cardinal NEST? The goal for the innovative learning lab we call the Cardinal NEST was created as a safe, unique and innovative learning



Students play keyboard on a touch-screen monitor.

space for the students of our community in Southeast Texas," Simpson described. "These plans and activities take students beyond their imaginations, fueled by their curiosity, passion and creativity."

As part of the launch for the most recently opened NEST, ExxonMobil and LU hosted a pep rally and ribbon-cutting ceremony with representatives from Beaumont ISD, followed by a STEM carnival for Amelia Elementary fourth and fifth graders. Students cheered with Lamar University's Big Red and the Amelia Elementary bear as the two mascots rallied the crowd. The Amelia Elementary choir sang for those gathered, and cheerleaders and the spirit team joined in the festivities to students' delight, also welcoming guests as they arrived for the fun-filled, educational event.

The establishment of the NEST was made possible through ExxonMobil's donation of \$25,000 to Lamar University's Community Relations Program in spring of 2020.

"Engineers help shape the future. Whether it's developing new fuel sources, managing energy resources more efficiently or exploring the outer edges of the universe, engineers make it happen," said Jennifer Dunphy, ExxonMobil Beaumont Chemical Plant site

manager. "The world will always have a need for engineers and scientists, and it's critical for us to be involved in such projects like the Cardinal NEST, so that our youngest neighbors can discover early the many career possibilities through science, technology and mathematics."

Lamar University President Dr. Jaime Taylor and Beaumont Independent School District Superintendent Dr. Shannon Allen also spoke to students at the event before joining Big Red to cut the ribbon on Amelia's new Cardinal NEST.

Once the ribbon was cut and the door swung open, students poured into the room, which sports murals that include a painted cardinal's nest cradled by the branches of one of the large trees spanning the walls. Big Red explored the new space with students, showing off some of the new equipment and joining them in some of the available STEAM activities. Students played touch-screen piano, built complex structures, perused laptops and caught up on some reading while visiting the NEST.

For more information on Cardinal NEST learning labs, visit lamar.edu/community-relations.

— Sharon Brooks

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Students in Amelia's Cardinal NEST utilize their new space.

BASF Corporation and TotalEnergies celebrate 20 years of operation in Port Arthur

This November marks 20 years since the startup of the joint venture between BASF Corporation and TotalEnergies Petrochemicals (BTP). Along with the operational success of the steam cracker in Port Arthur, the plant has retained approximately 70 employees who began working for the Port Arthur operation between 1998 and 2001, which speaks to the company culture and career opportunities. Now, the plant employs more than 300 full-time employees and contractors with an annual payroll of \$39.1 million.

Over the last 20 years, BTP has contributed more than \$4 million to non-profit, community-based organizations in Southeast Texas. The Port Arthur employees volunteer to support multiple charitable and community organizations including: The United Way, Miracle Match for Life and local area education programs. Port Arthur employees also help bring a variety of Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) programs to local schools to encourage future STEM careers.

“This year, BASF TotalEnergies Petrochemicals employees launched 20 Days of Giving for 20 Years in Business to collect items for local charity organizations,” said John Lycan, Vice President of Operations at BTP. “We strongly believe in giving back to the community we live and work in. I can’t think of a better way to honor 20 years of operational success than to give back to the community that supports us.”

“To say this partnership with TotalEnergies has been successful during the past 20 years is an understatement,” said Mary Kurian, BASF Senior Vice President, Petrochemicals, North America. “Over the years, the team in Port Arthur has increased feed flexibility, reliability, profitability and created a competitive edge that impacts all of BASF. We salute the employees for their hard work and are proud of their decision to celebrate this milestone by making a generous contri-

but ion to their community.”

Giving Campaign

For the 20 business days leading up to Nov. 23, BTP employees “give” thanks to the community for 20 years of support by contributing to the organizations listed below:

The Salvation Army Coats & Kettles - gently used or new coats and blankets

Some Other Place - nonperishable foods and toiletries

Samaritan Counseling Center of Southeast Texas- small canvases, paint, markers, colored pencils and adult coloring books

Port Arthur Hospitality Center - gently used or new knit caps, gloves, scarves, hand warmers, coats, shoes and socks and canned goods

Food Bank of Southeast Texas - non-perishable foods

Family Services of Southeast Texas Women’s and Children’s Shelter - big kid toys for those 12+ such as ear buds, art kits, makeup, makeup mirrors, makeup bags, bath stuff, selfie sticks, cell phone accessories, itunes cards and electronic handheld games

Port Arthur Blue Santa - Toys for 1-8-year-old children

Nutrition and Services for Seniors - dog and cat food

CPS Rainbow Room - baby diapers, baby wipes, infant and toddler clothing, Similac baby formula, comfort stuff animals, children’s books, Pak-n-Plays, car seats, infant and toddler boosters, toiletries, cleaning supplies, Walmart gift cards

United Way of Mid & South Jefferson County - Financial contribution, one-time or payroll deduction

Foundation for the Betterment of Seniors - Be Santa to a Senior Program - rubber sole socks, slippers, lotion, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner and facial care

Anayat House - Toilet paper, 13-gallon kitchen trash bags, liquid laundry detergent, Windex, Pledge, Scrubbing



Shelly Vitanza, Deborah Tomov with Family Services of Southeast Texas, Capt. Jason Moore with The Salvation Army, Penny Pennison with Family Services of Southeast Texas, Paula O’Neal with Some Other Place and Ashley Joseph with BASF TotalEnergies Petrochemicals LLC.

Bubbles, toilet bowl cleaner, disinfectant spray, Coffee mate powdered creamer and liquid creamer, bottled water, variety pack of chips

CPS - Gift items for teenagers, ages 12-17, including makeup kits, purses, wallets, sports memorabilia, gift cards to fast food restaurants, gift cards to GameStop



Shelly Vitanza, John Lycan, VP Site Manager at BASF TotalEnergies Petrochemicals LLC., Janie Johnson, CEO United Way of Mid & South Jefferson County, and Ashley Joseph with BASF TotalEnergies Petrochemicals LLC.

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CHRISTUS Southeast Texas Health System opens new operating rooms, expands access to care

CHRISTUS Southeast Texas Health System has expanded access for those in need of surgical services at the CHRISTUS Outpatient Pavilion St. Elizabeth, the health system reports. The expansion adds two new operating rooms, bringing the total count to eight.

The build-out of these two rooms has been planned since the center's opening in 2004. It is a part of a system-wide investment that adds much-needed space for general and OB/GYN surgeries and refreshes the Outpatient Pavilion surgery setting.

"This expansion to our facility is a wonderful resource for our patients, and provides an innovative surgical environment for our physician team to perform a wide variety of procedures from the simple to the highly complex," said Ruben Victores, MD, OBGYN.

These new rooms have been equipped with new state-of-the-art technology including the HD Free5 Camera System, which allows surgeons to view and record the surgical site from virtually

any orientation or angle. The rooms are also equipped with a CLEANSUITE Operating Room Ceiling System, the first in the area, which helps mitigate the risk of airborne particles and improves patient safety, significantly lowering the risks of infections.

The new operating rooms are strategically designed to allow CHRISTUS' board-certified surgeons to offer minimally invasive alternatives for complex gynecologic and general procedures, including cases with the da Vinci XI robotic surgery systems. One of the operating rooms was intricately designed to be dedicated to robotic surgery.

As the "first to bring robotic surgery to Southeast Texas" nearly 7 years ago, the health system has seen robotic surgeries grow into a very robust program, reports the health system. More and more patients are able to utilize this surgical option, and additional physicians continue to become trained and certified. To date, St. Elizabeth has 12 highly skilled and trained robotic sur-



geons who have performed more than 4,000 robotic surgeries.

Before the first scheduled surgery, the CHRISTUS Southeast Texas Spiritual Care team toured the new rooms and offered a blessing for all who enter these rooms as either a patient or provider.

"Our mission is to extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ by providing complete care to those in our nine-county region through these newly

opened OR suites at CHRISTUS Outpatient Pavilion St. Elizabeth. This is a milestone to be celebrated," said Paul Trevino, President and CEO of CHRISTUS Southeast Texas Health System.

The first surgeries in these new ORs were performed the morning of Dec. 1 by Ruben Victores, OB/GYN, and Iumy Torres-Barja, MD, General Surgeon.



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— Micah 5:3-4

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Port board appoints LaRue Smith to fill late husband's unexpired term



The Port of Beaumont Board of Commissioners unanimously voted to appoint LaRue Smith to fill the unexpired term of her late husband, Ward 3 Commissioner Lee E. Smith, the Port of Beaumont announced Nov. 15.

Smith, a retired educator with exceptional communication skills and strong community ties, was one of five applicants who expressed interest in the position. According to the Board of Commissioners, her knowledge of the Port of Beaumont made her uniquely qualified to fill the vacant seat.

"The opportunity to apply for the vacant position, as a result of the death of my husband, Commissioner Lee E. Smith, is one that I have, prayerfully, given great consideration," said LaRue Smith. "The passion that I have for the success of the Port of Beaumont, and to further the work that my husband began, have inspired me. I understand the important role the Port of Beaumont plays in the economic growth of Southeast Texas."

Smith has a Master's degree from Prairie View A&M University and is an accomplished educator, having earned recognition over the course of her career as: West Brook High School Teacher of the Year; Beaumont A&M Club Outstanding High School Teacher; Metropolitan PTA Good Apple Award; West Brook

High School PTA Outstanding Teacher Award; BISSD Employee of the Month; BISSD Strategic Planning Process Committee Member; Danforth Foundation Award for Outstanding Service to Education; Mirabeaux B. Lamar Award of Excellence in Teaching; featured on the cover of the Beaumont Southwestern Bell Telephone Directory; and South Park ISD Outstanding Teacher.

An active member of the community, Smith serves on the city of Beaumont Library Commission for Ward IV, is a nominating committee member for Education First Federal Credit Union, a member of the Beaumont Association of Retired Teachers, and a former board member of Sabine Oaks Nursing Home, among other roles. Smith has also given her time to Lamar University as a mentor to teaching interns and served as a TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) specialist, presenting workshops to teachers and students.

Through her new role as a Port of Beaumont Commissioner, she will continue to serve as an advocate for education and community growth, the port stated.

The swearing-in ceremony for LaRue Smith is planned for Monday, Dec. 13 at 10 a.m. in the Port of Beaumont Administration Building, located at 1225 Main Street in Beaumont.

Indorama Ventures recognized for sustainability efforts

Indorama Ventures Public Company Limited (IVL), a global sustainable chemical company, announced Nov. 18 its inclusion in the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index (DJSI World) and the Dow Jones Sustainability Emerging Markets Index (DJSI Emerging Markets) for the third and fifth consecutive year respectively. According to the company, “The successive years of DJSI inclusion reflect IVL’s strong commitment to sustainability with globally recognized industry best-in-class practices.”

This year, 139 chemical companies were selected from more than 11,000 companies from 61 industries and about 5,300 companies eligible for S&P Global ESG indices. IVL ranked in the 97th percentile with full scores in the areas of environmental and social compliance, enabling policies through industry associations, human rights protections in the workplace and value chain, and sustainable water management including forecasting potential water related risks in operations.

Yash Lohia, Chief Sustainability



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Indorama Ventures (IVL) is honored to be listed on **the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index** for the third consecutive year and **the Dow Jones Sustainability Emerging Markets Index** for the fifth consecutive year.

IVL thanks our staff, customers, and partners for continuously contributing to our sustainability commitment.

Officer at Indorama Ventures, said, “As a global leader, this is an important milestone in our operations as we transform the chemical industry. Our inclusion in the DJSI for the fifth year

running is a tribute to how IVL’s operations are contributing to a more sustainable future. Our strategy includes focusing on climate action, aligning with the world’s net zero ambitions,

strengthening the circular economy and PET recycling with our ambitious targets, and enhancing shared value with our stakeholders.”

Manjit Jus, Global Head of ESG Research at S&P Global, said, “We congratulate Indorama Ventures for being included in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI) for DJSI World and DJSI Emerging Markets. A DJSI distinction is a reflection of being a sustainability leader in your industry. The record number of companies participating in the 2021 S&P Global Corporate Sustainability Assessment is testament to the growing movement for ESG disclosure and transparency.”

The Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI) are a global benchmark for sustainability-driven companies, evaluating material governance and economic, environmental and social factors. Listed companies are considered best-in-class in their industries for sustainability achievements at a global level. For more detail on Corporate Sustainability Assessment, visit spglobal.com



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Valero Port Arthur Refinery distributes \$1M to local charitable organizations

Valero's Port Arthur Refinery distributed \$1 million to local charities from funds raised through the Valero Texas Open (VTO) and Valero Benefit for Children (BFC).

This year, the tournament and associated events, including the BFC, raised more than \$16 million in net proceeds for charitable organizations across the U.S., including those in the Port Arthur area. The tournament is ranked No. 1 in charitable giving on the PGA TOUR this year.

"Valero is honored to be part of the tournament's legacy of giving back through the generous support of our business partners and sponsors," said Joe Gorder, Valero Chairman and CEO. "With our longstanding relationship through the BFC, the tournament has helped raise more than \$187 million for charities, positively impacting many lives in the communities where we operate across the United States."

"We're driven to make a difference for our community," said Mark Skobel, Vice President and General Manager of the Valero Port Arthur Refinery. "We're proud to continue supporting these agencies and all they do to improve children's lives in Southeast Texas."



The 2021 Valero Benefit for Children local recipients are: Beaumont Children's Museum; Boy Scouts of America; Boys' Haven; Capland Speech Therapy Center; CASA of Southeast Texas; Christus Foundation – Children's Miracle Network;

Communities in Schools of Southeast Texas; Crime Stoppers – Student Campus Conference; Family Services of Southeast Texas; Garth House, Mickey Mehaffy Children's Advocacy Program; Girl Scouts; Girls' Haven; Make-A-Wish; Port Arthur

ISD; Richard L. Shorkey Education and Rehabilitation Center; Sabine Pass ISD; Samaritan Counseling Center; and YMCA of Southeast Texas.

The VTO is poised to celebrate its 100th anniversary March 28-April 4, 2022.

The Medical Center of Southeast Texas earns Level III NICU designation

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at The Medical Center of Southeast Texas has earned its Level III designation through 2025 from the Texas Department of State Health Services. A designation of this level highlights The Medical Center's ability to care for critically ill infants.

"The Medical Center of Southeast Texas is proud of our NICU team for achieving this important designation," said President Josh Snow. "The Level III NICU designation means our hospital provides expert care in our community for newborns who need highly specialized treatment, including babies with low birth weights and those born as early as 23 weeks."

Chief Nursing Officer John Kight was thrilled for his staff saying, "I am incredibly proud of this remarkable team for their accomplishment and thrilled to offer a high standard of care, including 24/7 neonatologist in house at all times. We remain grateful to our clinical staff for providing exceptional care for our littlest patients and celebrate this achievement with you all."

Christina Irion, director of NICU, expressed her gratitude to her team and other key hospital personnel who worked hard to obtain this designation.

She said, "Thank you to all of our NICU



staff, women's services and the multi-disciplinary team that helped us receive this designation. We are thrilled to serve these families here in Southeast Texas without the added stress of leaving the area for care."

These types of designation are a result of legislation passed in 2013 requiring Texas to implement neonatal levels of care designations with the intent of ensuring that NICUs have the resources and expertise to provide high quality patient care.

The Medical Center of Southeast Texas "remains committed to its continued accomplishments and its focus on bringing quality, compassionate care in Southeast Texas."

Learn more about The Medical Center of Southeast Texas on its website, medicalcentersetexas.org.

IN BRIEF

City manager, attorney announce exits

The city of Beaumont is losing two longtime employees who have sat alongside the City Council for decades during deliberations each week.

Beaumont City Manager Kyle Hayes announced Nov. 9 that he would be retiring from the city where he has worked for over 19 years, effective sometime between March and April 2022. Shortly after his announcement, City Attorney Tyrone Cooper, who has served in his current position for 17 years and with the city for 42 years, announced Nov. 23 that he would also be leaving the city's employment effective Dec. 26.

Hayes is the longest serving city manager in Beaumont's history. In an open letter to citizens, Hayes cited some of the highlights of his career with the municipality, including city



Hayes



Cooper

improvements like the Calder Avenue Project; The Event Centre; The Lakeside Center; Washington Boulevard reconstruction; numerous streets and drainage projects; park improvements; and illuminated traffic signage. He was also on duty during four major storms and the recovery efforts that followed.

He expressed pride in department directors and key city staffers, and thanked citizens and supporters.

"The city of Beaumont is a great place to work and I wish all of you and this great city much future success," wrote Hayes.

Cooper first started with the city in 1979 "as the first African American assistant to be hired in the legal department, to eventually become the first African American appointed City Attorney for the city of Beaumont," he shared in an open letter to citizens, recalling two historic milestones in his life. In addition, Cooper assisted the city in acquiring the property rights and land necessary to transform what was formerly Railroad Avenue into Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway. He served on boards of directors for the Texas City Attorney's Association and the International Municipal Lawyers Association, and has served both as board president.

Cooper also thanked his supporters and staff in his farewell letter.

"To my staff, thank you for all that you have done in helping me to make Beaumont a place we can all be proud

of. I pray for continued success for you all," he wrote.



'Progress!'

The city of Orange is celebrating as contractors continue building the municipality's new rec center. City officials took to social media to express their enthusiasm on Nov. 17, posting a photo of the rec center currently under construction.

"The city of Orange is excited to share that construction is underway at the Recreation Center, located at 1405 W. Orange Avenue," city staff posted. "Stay tuned for additional details and updates as the project progresses."

Visit the city's Facebook page at @OrangeTexasGov for updates and information.

Beaumont CVB celebrates successful 2021

Sales efforts, local awareness campaigns, new marketing initiatives and new staff are "catapulting the Beaumont Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) as a leader in the community for economic growth," reports the organization.

Each year, the Beaumont CVB works diligently to entice groups, conventions and sports planners to choose Beaumont for their meeting destination. These meetings impact the local economy through hotel occupancy taxes and tourism dollars.

Throughout 2021, the convention sales team hosted several week-long meetings and tournaments with some sporting events that brought in well over 100 teams each weekend. With the support of recently launched sales initiatives, the sales staff has booked new business for 2022 and is looking ahead to 2023 and beyond to book meetings in Beaumont.

In addition to those sales efforts, the marketing team expanded awareness to a larger audience by creating new programming and events including a Geocaching pass, Cajun Trail foodie pass, hosting ARTACO and Beaulympics. Most recently, the Beaumont CVB implemented a bike-sharing system, Beaucycles, in historic downtown Beaumont with an affordable \$5 rental fee.

Through these new opportunities and by promoting local events and attractions, an influx of funds is being infused into the community. According to the Travel Texas Industry Association, visitor spending in Beaumont, which includes meetings, sports, and leisure, was estimated at over \$308 million within the last year. This figure tops surrounding cities including Sugarland, The Woodlands and Conroe.



Alexander



Jackson



Woodland

Besides those achievements, the Beaumont CVB also announced new faces and positions recently added to the team.

Virtue Alexander took the role as the new senior convention sales manager after working in the hospitality and sales industry throughout the area for the past 20 years.

"Her experience with the industry and love for the city will be a contributing factor to booking business in Beaumont," according to the CVB.

After 11 years, Beaumont CVB Convention Sales Manager Susan Jackson moved to the marketing team as the new tourism manager. Her experience and dedication to working with partners in the area and creating new opportunities for the community and visitors are "unmatched," the CVB described.

With an emphasis on nature tourism in the area, longtime Beaumont CVB Sales Manager Rebecca Woodland is taking her talents to the Tyrrell Park Nature Center as the new manager. This exciting endeavor at Tyrrell Park will bring in many visitors to Beaumont and offer educational opportunities for all ages.

"It has been a whirlwind of growth and change, but we could not be more excited for the future of Beaumont, as tourism is truly economic development," said Beaumont

CVB Executive Director Dean Conwell. "We have a lot of experienced and talented minds on our staff that work hard to put Beaumont in the forefront of convention and tourism markets."

Looking ahead to 2022, both the sales and marketing teams will be expanding community outreach.

"The Beaumont CVB wants to encourage others in the community to change their outlook on the area to see that there is something for everyone in Beaumont," the organization shared.

About Beaumont Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB):

As the official Destination Marketing Organization, the CVB's mission is to promote and market Beaumont as a premier visitor and convention meeting destination to positively affect the city's economy. Learn more about the CVB's mission and funding at www.beaumontcvb.com/about.

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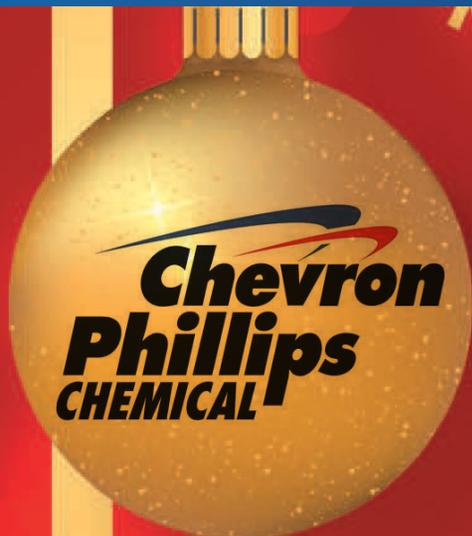
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Workforce Solutions opens Silsbee Education and Career Center in Palm Plaza

Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas has relocated its Silsbee Career Center to Palm Plaza at 975 Highway 327 in Silsbee to better serve residents of Hardin County and held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Nov. 9 to celebrate the move.

Workforce Solutions will share the 3,700-square-foot space with partners Region 5 Education Service Center and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Job seekers and employers in Hardin County will have access to a resource area with six computers for job search and employment services activity. There is also a large classroom that can be utilized for meetings, workshops and other events.

Workforce Solutions Executive Director Mary Hammon stated, "We are very excited to be invited to collaborate with Region 5 Education Service Center at this location. Palm Plaza provides easy access, a pleasant atmosphere, and will allow us to provide the full array of workforce assistance to Hardin County."



Region 5 Education Services Center Adult Education will offer classes for basic educational and literacy skills, including GED, ESL, computer literacy, college and career preparation and remediation, as well as other learning opportunities for multiple populations. A Vocational Rehabilitation case worker will also be available by appointment.

The new location for Workforce Solutions Silsbee Career Center is

now open and available to the public Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas Board is a business-led group of volunteers that evaluates and oversees the delivery of all workforce training and employment services in Hardin, Jefferson and Orange counties. Hardin County Judge Wayne McDaniel serves the board as one of four Chief Elected Officials. The board's overall mission is to identify opportunities and create partnerships that effectively link employers and job seekers to improve the economic future of the area. Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas brings together a myriad of programs for easy access for employers and job seekers.

Governor Abbott delivers remarks at Toyota Tundra Roll Off ceremony



Governor Greg Abbott delivered remarks at the Toyota Tundra Roll Off Ceremony in San Antonio.

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Capital One champions Gift of Life efforts

With the generous support of Capital One, Gift of Life Women's Breast Health & Cancer Prevention Program provided 40 medically underserved women with free breast health services that included screenings and diagnostic tests at the Dauphin Center in Beaumont. Nicole Benton, Capital One Market Manager, and Linda Richardson, Capital One Administrative Support Associate, attended the site to meet clients and share their belief in the importance of good health and wellness.

Capital One is a flourishing financial institution that "exemplifies the gold standard" of community impact by doing good for its customers, associates, and communities. As the nation's fifth-largest consumer bank and eighth-largest bank overall, the company's foundational mission is to help customers succeed by bringing ingenuity, simplicity and humanity to banking.

For about 20 years, Capital One has been a champion of Gift of Life's mission through its provision of educational outreach of essential literature bags containing materials that are

distributed to thousands of Southeast Texans and free medical services for at-risk women. Throughout the pandemic, the company has been a proponent for growth and economic success by ensuring that community and philanthropic initiatives are fully integrated into its business model.

According to Gift of Life, the altruistic participation of Capital One illustrates its commitment to helping enhance health care services for individuals who cannot afford health insurance or high deductibles. The company has been an effective advocate for Gift of Life Women's Health Program, which provides free health care services throughout seven Southeast Texas counties, including the provision of free mammograms and diagnostic testing.



Capital One Administrative Support Associate Linda Richardson, Gift of Life client, Capital One Market Manager Nicole Benton, and Gift of Life Founder & Chair Regina Rogers.

With the endorsement of Capital One and other generous donors, Gift of Life has helped extend the lives of nearly 350 Southeast Texans who have been diagnosed with breast or

prostate cancer and provided cancer treatment.

For more information about Gift of Life and its services, visit giftoflifemt.org or call (409) 833-3663.

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Honey B Ham in Beaumont

The Honey B Ham Company in Beaumont is well-known and locally loved for its delicious honey-glazed, spiral-cut hams, sold year-round and particularly popular for Thanksgiving and Christmas feasts. They also sell glazed turkeys in a variety of sizes and offer lunch options aplenty for diners on the go.

The Honey B team specializes in glazing and slow-cooking plump hams and turkeys, as well as turkey breasts for small groups. The hams range in size from about 6 pounds all the way up to 18 pounds. Whole turkeys generally range from about 11-13 pounds, and turkey breasts are approximately 7-9 pounds. Pricing is available on the Honey B Ham website: www.honeybhambeaumont.com.

Don't want to cook at all for that big family dinner? That's no problem when you shop at Honey B Ham. They have broccoli rice casserole, sweet potato casserole, baked potato casserole, cornbread dressing and

macaroni and cheese for sale in convenient large serving pans ready to heat and serve. They also have some of their hearty soups packaged to take home.

Owners Lena Davis and Gerald Alexander have owned Honey B Ham in Beaumont for 30 years, Davis shared.

"We started as a ham business. We sell glazed hams and turkeys. Through the years, the menu has gotten a little bigger, and lunch has really flourished," said Davis.

During lunchtime, the restaurant serves their famous ham as a sandwich on your choice of bread, along with numerous other sandwich selections, and sells some of the best chicken and sausage gumbo in town. The gumbo is savory and a touch spicy with ample chicken and sausage. It's a perfect hot lunch option on a cold, blustery winter day.

"Everything here is made from scratch, so it takes a lot of time and preparation doing things that way,"



Spiral Sliced Ham & Cheese

Davis described. "We seem to have the same people coming back. They love to eat here, especially the older groups because they want to eat healthy. So, this is where they come, and they don't have to worry about preservatives or anything like that. Our gumbo is really popular. We sell lots of gumbo."

There are so many sandwich options available at Honey B Ham it can be difficult to choose one, but you can't go wrong with the spiral-cut ham sandwich. Served on sweet or wheat sourdough or on a jalapeno-cheese roll, the freshly cut lettuce and tomato nicely complement the ham, which is savory with a sweet honey glaze.

Guests to Honey B Ham can also buy pickled peppers, candied jalapeños, cinnamon honey butter, sweet jams and other preserves while there. They make great Christmas gifts, as do the gourmet English toffee bundles available for sale at the counter.

The best part about doing business in Beaumont, the owners agree, are

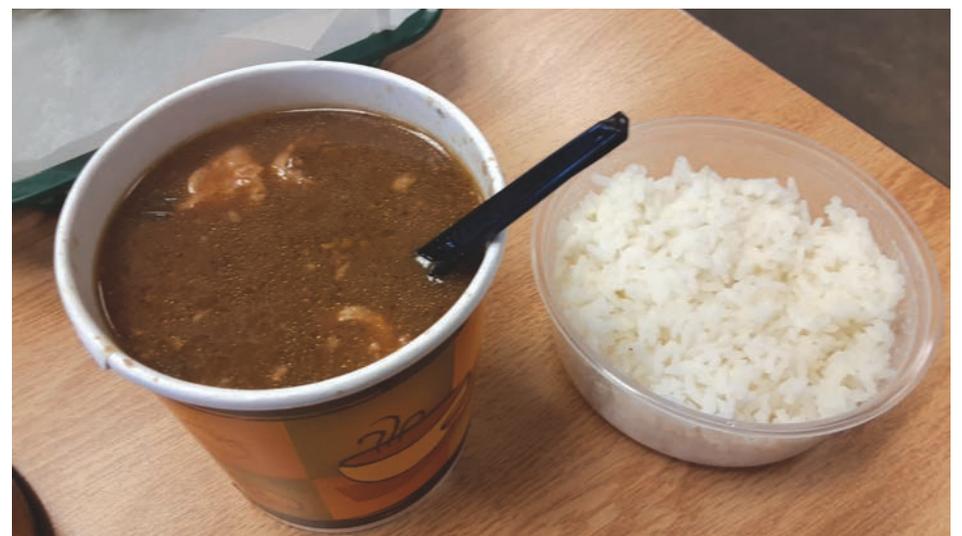
the repeat customers who frequent the restaurant and have become part of the Honey B family.

"There's a core group of people who always come and they often see a lot of people they know when they come here," said Alexander. "It's comfortable."

"We're all family here, one way or another," Davis explained. "My customers are like family. I've known a lot of them for 30 years. And people like to come here and see their family. They tell me that all the time."

Visit your Honey B Ham family at 6385 Calder Avenue, Suite A, in Beaumont. The restaurant is open from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday through Friday. The business will be closed from approximately Dec. 15-25 to prepare hams and turkeys for the holidays, just as it is each November for about 10 days preceding Thanksgiving. Call (409) 860-3151 for information or to order a ham or turkey.

— Sharon Brooks



Chicken & Sausage Gumbo with rice

Neches FCU hosts 6th Annual Veteran's Day 5K and raises \$3,500

Neches Federal Credit Union has announced that they raised \$3,500 on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, that will go to support the Wounded Warrior Family Foundation. The funds were raised by way of a 5K, seven-mile bike ride, and one-mile walk/run that the credit union hosted in celebration of veterans.

The 5K event was promoted and hosted internally by Neches FCU, and employees were encouraged to ride their bike, walk or run. Donations

contributed by the Neches FCU team were matched by the credit union.

Over 200 participants from Neches FCU participated in the virtual event and were encouraged to post their pictures on Neches FCU's Facebook page using the hashtag #NechesWalksForVets.

"We are extremely proud of this annual event and salute those who have served and sacrificed to protect our country," said Jason Landry, President/CEO of Neches FCU.



Kristen Stewart, Paula Cappadonna, Jason Landry and Jason Duplant

Featherston appointed United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas

Brit Featherston has taken the oath of office to become the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas, his office announced Nov. 16. Featherston was appointed to the position by Attorney General Merrick Garland and took the oath of office from Chief U.S. District Judge Rodney Gilstrap.

"This is my home; serving and protecting the great citizens of East Texas has been my priority for a long time and it will continue into the future," said U.S. Attorney Featherston. "I am blessed to work with a dedicated team of professionals who make it their daily mission to protect the citizens of this great country. I also look forward to jointly working with our law enforcement

partners who bravely protect our communities every day."

Featherston, 61, of Lumberton, is the chief federal law enforcement official in the Eastern District of Texas, which includes 43 counties stretching from the Oklahoma border to the Gulf of Mexico. The district includes six fully staffed offices in Beaumont, Plano, Tyler, Sherman, Texarkana and Lufkin, with 120 employees, including 60 prosecutors. Featherston is responsible for the prosecution of federal criminal offenses in the district and will represent the United States in all civil litigation in the district.

Since joining the office in 1996, Featherston has served in the capacity of First



Assistant U.S. Attorney, Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney, and supervisory U.S. Attorney. He was also appointed Acting United States Attorney in September 2016

and served in that capacity for 17 months. In January 2018, Featherston became the Justice Attaché for the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan. In addition to prosecuting high-profile cases such as the dragging death of James Byrd Jr. in Jasper County, Featherston has been instrumental in crisis management operations during numerous Southeast Texas hurricanes, as well as assisting in the establishment of a command post and the investigation and prosecution of crimes related to the space shuttle crash in 2003 in Lufkin.

For more information about the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Texas, visit <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edtx>.

State sales tax revenue totals \$3.6 billion in November

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar announced Dec. 2 that state sales tax revenue totaled \$3.56 billion in November, 19.4% more than in November 2020. The majority of November sales tax revenue is based on sales made in October and remitted to the agency in November.

Year-over-year increases for most tax revenues continue to be affected by base effects: Year-ago revenue collections to which this year's collections are compared were suppressed by the pandemic. Compared to November 2019, sales tax collections were up 11.8%.

"November sales tax collections once again reached a new monthly high," Hegar said. "Texas continues to see growth in taxable sales in every major economic sector.

"Sales tax remittances from the construction, manufacturing and wholesale trade sectors had substantial growth compared to

last year, indicating increased economic activity in the state despite continuing supply chain or labor shortage issues. Increased drilling drove higher collections from the oil and gas mining sector, though still remaining significantly below pre-pandemic levels.

"Collections from the retail trade sector remained strong in November, as they have been for most of the pandemic. Receipts from electronics and appliance stores had the sharpest increase compared to a year ago, while receipts from home improvement and furniture and home furnishing stores, already elevated last year by pandemic-induced shifts in consumer spending, again had double-digit percentage gains from a year ago. Receipts from clothing stores and sporting goods stores also had double-digit gains. Growth in spending at online merchandisers slowed

in comparison to other sectors but still achieved growth year-over-year.

"The restaurant and service sectors continued their high growth compared to a year ago as Texans increasingly return to enjoying food and activities away from home. Receipts from the information sector also had strong growth over a year ago."

Total sales tax revenue for the three months ending in November 2021 was up 22.2% compared to the same period a year ago and 15.7% compared to 2019. Sales tax is the largest source of state funding for the state budget, accounting for 59% of all tax collections.

Texas collected the following revenue from other major taxes, most of which were up sharply from a year ago due to base effects: motor vehicle sales and rental taxes – \$518 million; up 25% from November 2020, and up 23% from November 2019;

motor fuel taxes – \$334 million, up 3% from November 2020, and up 2% from November 2019; oil production tax – \$480 million, up 141% from November 2020, and up 39% from November 2019; natural gas production tax – \$291 million, up 282% from November 2020, and up 143% from November 2019; hotel occupancy tax – \$58 million, up 78% from November 2020, and down 4% from November 2019; and alcoholic beverage taxes – \$141 million, up 47% from November 2020, and up 19% from November 2019.

For details on all monthly collections, visit the Comptroller's Monthly State Revenue Watch. For an extensive history of tax policy developments and fees since 1972, look for its updated Sources of Revenue publication available through the comptroller's website, www.comptroller.texas.gov.

Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce

From the Desk of the President **How to score big for your business this holiday season**



Beaumont Chamber President
Bill Allen

From Thanksgiving to Christmas there's a battle that occurs for consumer dollars. The big guy against the little guy, the brick-and-mortar versus the online retailer, everyone is looking for a bigger piece of the pie. It's time to start thinking about your holiday marketing.

Mobile

If you want to improve sales, mobile is it. The average person looks at their phone 46 times a day, with people in the 18-24 age bracket checking it 74 times, according to TIME magazine. They research, watch videos, make purchases, and get directions to stores. If your site isn't mobile ready, you're missing customers and your organic search listing is being penalized, as Google takes mobile into account.

In addition to having a mobile-friendly website, look for ways to reach your buyers on mobile. Consider deals for people looking you up on their phone. That's a very warm lead. Do all you can to convert it to a prospect. Also, if you get moving quickly you could get your site optimized for local keywords that would help you score better in local search.

Social Media

If your social media presence isn't as strong as you like, start today. This very minute. Select three platforms and dedicate some significant time to developing a personality on them and posting and interacting with people on a regular basis. The holiday time is a great time to do this because you can push contests and there are tons of ideas for content. Aim



to post several times a day and interact with people in between those times. Use a scheduler like Hootsuite. I often schedule posts during the evening hours while I'm unwinding.

Reviews

Reviews are the lifeblood of a lot of businesses. Ask for them, read them, and respond to each of your reviews. Remind customers how much they mean to you and make it easy for them to do so. One local business that served ice cream used table tents to remind people of the importance of reviews to their business. That's the perfect time because they're sitting at the table looking at their phones anyway.

Gift Sets

If you have a product that is conducive to it, create gift sets. There's something about things put together in a way that is appealing. Just ask Bath & Body. Their gift sets are wildly popular and an easy go-to gift for someone who doesn't want to put together something on their own.

Gift Cards

Offering gift cards is a great way to sell more at the holidays. If you don't want to handle the administrative headache of doing so, check with your chamber. They may have a local currency program where they handle the administration and your business is one of the participating mer-

chants.

Contests

Contests are wildly popular on Facebook and Instagram, particularly picture-taking contests like "Share Pictures of Your Shopping Treasures." It not only gets people excited about your business but also gets them talking about it for others to see. Don't forget to use a hashtag.

A Final Word on

Improving Your Holiday Sales

Sales are impulsive, so let logic go. Find ways to meet customers where they are and that usually means online. Competition is fierce, but if you use social media and reviews to your benefit, you can show them a different side of you and stand out from the crowd.

Christina R. Green teaches small businesses, chambers, and associations how to connect through content. Her articles have appeared in the Associations North (formerly Midwest Society of Association Executives) Magazine, NTEN.org, AssociationTech, and Socialfish. She is a regular blogger at Frankjenny.com and the Event Manager Blog.

She's a bookish writer on a quest to bring great storytelling to organizations everywhere.



Let it shine

The Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce's "Let it Shine" is back for another year of celebrating our new members! "Let It Shine" is a festive and themed holiday event featuring networking opportunities, business-to-business exhibits, business-to-consumer exhibits, and much more. Exhibitor booths can only be reserved by the Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce members, and there are still some great spots available! "Let It Shine" is open to the public and admission is free.

Monday Dec. 6, 2021
5-7 p.m. CST

Holiday Inn & Suites Beaumont Plaza
3950 I-10 South and Walden Rd.
Beaumont, TX 77705

New members

Micah L. Dobbs
Flying Chance Productions
H.B. Neild & Sons, Inc.
Sent Handz
High & Tight Roof & Remodel
QC Kinetix
Savell's Paint & Body
Paradise Wellness Med Spa

Family Smiles Beaumont
Arrow Child and Family
Ministries
Pour09
Grand Canyon University
Neches Management Services
LLC

Content provided by the Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce

Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce

Mix and Mingle December 9th



Join us for a holiday Mix and Mingle at G&G Enterprises on Dec. 9
4:30-6:30 p.m.

3260 Eastex Freeway

December 14th Luncheon



Please join us as we hear from your U.S. Congressman, Randy Weber, at the CommonCents Credit Union Federal Update Luncheon! Listen and ask questions as he discusses issues that are impacting Southeast Texas like the backlogged supply chain, inflation, and infrastructure.

Register at: bmtcoc.org/events

Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2021
11 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Beaumont Breakfast Club November 2021

The Chamber held its November Beaumont Breakfast Club on the 5th for local businesses and nonprofit organizations. The speakers highlighted ways to give back to the community during the holiday season.

Beaumont Breakfast Club



Contact Mike for sponsorship opportunities for 2022!
MikeSimpson@BmtCOC.org

The Beaumont Breakfast Club is a fast-paced monthly networking event. It is targeted more toward small businesses, nonprofits, and new Chamber members. There will be multiple ways to connect with other business people in structured and unstructured activities.

Join us in 2022 on Jan. 7 at 8 a.m. at the MCM Elegante Hotel! Register at: bmtcoc.org/events

Mix and Mingle at 5 Under Golf and Flagship Mail Room



Mix and Mingles provide an avenue for Chamber Members to showcase their business to the community. In November, the Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce had two members host Mix and Mingles including: 5 Under Golf and Flagship Mail Room. Flagship Mail Room is the longest running Mix and Mingle host with the Chamber!



Content provided by the Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce

Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce

40-Under-40



The Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce celebrated the 2021 40 Under 40 honorees at the Big Reveal Celebration on Thursday, November 11th at the MCM Elegante' Hotel & Conference Center. The presentation honored the brightest young professionals under the age of 40 for their academic achievements, professional success, and community involvement.

Junior Leadership



The November program for Junior Leadership was a Public Safety and Criminal Justice Day! We worked with the Beaumont Police and Fire Departments to bring an educational and fun experience to the students. Thank you to those teams as well as Beaumont Fire and Rescue and the Fire Museum for all their help!

Mentorship Program



The Leadership Development Division of the Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce is actively working to recruit bright, energetic and enthusiastic members of our community to participate in the Mentorship Program.

This year's program kicked off last week with a great group of participants! We are looking forward to building relationships through the next nine months.

Ribbon Cuttings for QC Kinetix and Salvation Army



The Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce welcomed a new member, QC Kinetix on November 16th! We also celebrated the newest project by the Salvation Army and Habitat for Humanity "Home Sweet Home Shelter". Thank you to all of our Board Members, Ambassadors, Volunteers, and other community partners for attending.

Greater Orange Area Chamber of Commerce

From the President Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet



Orange Chamber
President Ida Schossow



The Greater Orange Area Chamber of Commerce held their Strategic Planning Retreat on Nov. 17. The 2021 Board of Directors and the 2022 Board of Directors meet to plan what the Chamber would like to accomplish next year. There will be some exciting new programs starting next year.

Kristen Placette with Sabine Federal Union will be Chairman of the Board for 2022. The Vice Chairs are Steve Jones of Unique Data, Operation and Chairman Elect; Jessica Hill of Orange County Economic Development Corporation, Govern-

mental; Heather Montagne of Heather Montagne Insurance Agency, Special Projects; Travis Williams of Sabine River Authority, Economic Development; Chad Kemp of Dominion Forms, Membership Services; Shaun McAlpin of Or-

angefield ISD, Education; and David May of Community Bank, Treasurer.

It is the time of year that we are all out shopping for the holidays. This year, I hope you consider shopping local for your needs. Our businesses have had a tough couple of years. When you shop local it helps us all in one way or another.

Shopping should be an enjoyable experience that leaves us feeling good instead of like it was a chore. I find that's far more likely to happen when I'm patronizing local businesses where I know the people that work there. I know some people may say they can save a little money buying from a website that offers no chance to "try before you buy" and creates no local jobs or local benefits.

When you shop local you are building a tradition that strengthens local economies, nurtures a sense of community and provides a more relaxed, fun and rewarding shopping experience. You have a great opportunity to influence the recipient of your gifts by simply letting them know you chose to buy local. Think about it as the "pass it on" theory. So, do yourself and your community a favor this year by shifting more of your spending to your local merchants. Along with helping your neighbors and community, you may just find "going local" turns the holiday season into a far more relaxing and enjoyable experience. I personally think that it will be something that rewards both you and your

community.

I received information from our good friends from Shangri La about the upcoming strolls. Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center will once again usher in the Christmas season with Christmas Strolls. Colorful displays throughout the gardens, along with lighted community-decorated Christmas trees, will welcome visitors. You are cordially invited to come out for a leisurely stroll through our illuminated landscapes and celebrate the holiday season. Christmas Strolls run from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. during the evenings of Dec. 8-11, December 15-18, and December 21-22.

Don't forget that admission to Shangri La Gardens is FREE. Even so, please consider donating nonperishable food items to Orange Christian Services to support those in greatest need throughout our community. Christmas Strolls are a great way to celebrate the Christmas season with family and friends. Please come out, enjoy the beautifully decorated Christmas trees created by talented members of our community, and make Christmas Strolls at Shangri La Gardens a family tradition.

Located at 2111 West Park Ave. in Orange, Shangri La Gardens is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday FREE of charge from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. For more information call (409) 670-9113 or visit shangrilagardens.org.

Renewed Members

Mathews Jewelers Orange
Cypress Bayou Industrial Painting
Global Green Insurance Agency
Orange County Marine
Orange County Physical Therapy, LLC
Webco Industries
Servpro of Orange/Nederland/Lumberton
North Orange Baptist Church
Columbanus Motor Sports
Business Health Partners
Southeast Texas Council on Alcohol &

Drug Abuse
The Salvation Army
Industrial Thermal Services
Cottage Cuttings
Body Workz
Best Western Orange Inn & Suites
Industrial Power & Rubber, Inc
Piney Woods Santation
Coastal Welding Supply, Inc.
Whataburger #536
Cecil Atkission Motors



Gatemouth Plaza ribbon cutting

The Greater Orange Chamber of Commerce joined Lamar State College Orange (LSCO) President Tom Johnson and members of Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown's family recently to cut the ribbon on a new outdoor plaza named for Orange native and Grammy-winning musician Gatemouth Brown. Gatemouth's brother, Bobby Brown, also a musician, and his daughter, Gatemouth's niece, Brenda Brown, cut the ribbon to officially unveil and dedicate the plaza, located on the LSCO campus.



Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce



Pat Avery
President/CEO
Greater Port Arthur
Chamber of Commerce

Davis.

Judith is a graduate of Hebert High School class of 1975, and she graduated from Lamar University in 1979 with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She has been a registered nurse for the last 42 years.

Judith's employment with the City of Port Arthur Health Department started in 1983 as a staff nurse working in the Immunization and Adult Health Services clinic.

In 1993, she became the Nurse Supervisor for the Tuberculosis Clinic under Texas Department of Health and remained with that program for 12 years in the health department.

In 2005, Judith became the Assistant Health Director and continued providing TB services to residents in the community who were impacted by the disease and Latent TB infection.

Judith was promoted and appointed as Director of

The past recipients of the Arthur E. Stilwell Awards have selected Judith Ann Smith as the 2022 recipient of the Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce's highest award. Previous winners of the Arthur E. Stilwell Award include Tom Neal, Verna Rutherford, Sam Monroe, State Senator Carl Parker, Jeff Hayes, Hargie Savoy, Floyd Marceaux and Rita

Health Services for the City of Port Arthur in 2013, and she continues to serve in this position today. She oversees 14 divisions within the health department and provides public health services to South Jefferson County and surrounding cities.

In 2016, she graduated from the Lord's Outreach School of Ministry with a Doctorate in Theology.

The Port Arthur Health Department nurses, under her leadership, led the team and support staff to assist the County in starting the first COVID-19 mass testing activity at the Jack Brooks Airport in March 2020. In February 2021, the COVID-19 mass vaccination HUB was set up at the Bob Bower Civic Center and thousands of vaccines were administered.

"Mrs. Judith Smith has always carried the torch of leadership with humility, dignity, and pride. As a health care professional, her selflessness and call to duty have never wavered prior to nor during the trying times of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are thankful for Judith Smith's loyalty and dedication to the City of Port Arthur."

Ron Burton
City Manager, City of Port Arthur

"In attempting to confront the issue of testing of COVID-19 exposed or positive individuals and

vaccination, Judith stepped up to quickly, professionally and effectively address the challenges we faced. Her dedication to the mission of fighting the spread within the Southeast Texas region is deeply appreciated by me and the other members of our emergency management community."

Judge Jeff Branick
County Judge, Jefferson County

Judith serves on the boards of the Julie Rogers Gift of Life and the YMCA. She is also a member of the Southeast Texas Black Nurses Association, the National Black Nurses Association and is a Port Arthur Rotarian. She is an ordained minister and teaches Christian doctrine at the Ruach School of Theology.

Additionally, Judith has received the 'Save Our Children' 'Difference Maker Award' (2020-2021); the Rotary "Presidential Award" (2021); and the Masonic Grand Lodge of Texas "Community Builder Award" for community service (2021).

Judith is married to Dallas Joseph Smith Jr. for the last 39 years and is the mother of two adult children, Dallas III and wife (Diante), Jalyn Junell and husband (Marcus), and the grandmother of two granddaughters.

Pat Avery
President/CEO,
Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce

Dedication to Paige Snyder

The Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors dedicated a beautiful bench in honor of the late Paige Snyder, who passed away in September.

The plaque reads:

"In Loving Memory of Paige Snyder
Leader and Friend to all GPACOC Ambassador
06/23/2010 – 09/06/2021"

Contributing to this project was Jennifer Lewis, Patti Harrington, Darragh Castillo, Natasha Garrett, Tonya Petix, Victoria Derouen, Yasiri Pablo and Nicole Smith.

Paige oversaw the Ambassador Committee Program.

A few words from the Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce:

"Paige was instrumental in the direction of our Ambassador Committee Program. Her vision towards a community that embraces economic development was inspirational. Pat and I truly lost a friend and family



member with her passing. This dedication is both beautiful and touching."

Joe Tant
Financial/Admin. Manager
GPACOC

"Joe and I were deeply moved by the generosity of our Ambassador Committee to honor our beloved colleague, Paige Snyder. The bench symbolizes the amount of respect and admiration that Paige garnered from those that she touched."

Pat Avery
President/CEO
GPACOC

New members

A.B. Genuine Health
All Points Environmental L.L.C.
Allegiant Industrial
Bartlett Cocke Industrial
Boutique & Bling / Lil Mommy's Boutique
Brock Services, LLC
Callan Marine Ltd.
Comfort Inn & Suites by Choice Hotels
Community Coffee
Core Occupational Medicine
Dashiell Corporation
Dominican Power Barbershop LLC.
Edith's Place
EquipmentShare
Eric K. Webb Photography
Extreme Detail Hand Wash LLC.
FD Solutions LLC.

Good Choices
Keystone Engineering Inc
Landlord's Daiquiri Den Drive Thru and Lounge
McElveen Insurance
Mid County Land Company
OMI Environmental Solutions
Phoenix Industrial Water Works
Port Arthur Chiropractic
Sanitary Supply Company, Inc.
Southeast Texas Republican Women
Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum
T-Mobile
Texas Star Freight LLC
Wells Fargo - Twin City Hwy.
Wilson's Warehouse
YAD Services LLC



Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce

Camino al Exito



It's been another great year of the Hispanic Forum "Camino al Exito" hosted by the Hispanic Business Council of the Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce. This event has been held since 2019, and people always leave inspired to continue their journey to success. For everyone in the room, success comes in different ways and each one has a different goal. Hearing the stories of the four speakers gave everyone motivation to keep going and to never give up regardless of their circumstances. The four speakers

this year were: Daniel Cruz, owner of Cruz Events; Ana Pereda, business advisor for LiftFund Company; Jose Garcia, owner of El Viejo Tony's Bar and Grill; and Angel San Juan, reporter for KFDM/Fox4. After hearing from the speakers, everyone was able to enjoy food from the main sponsor El Viejo Tony's Bar and Grill while they visited 14 booths with information from different organizations and businesses in our community. Truly an event to keep in your calendar for next year!

Ribbon Cutting

The Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce joined AB Genuine Health, known on Facebook as A.B. Genuine HealthCare, on Nov. 23 to celebrate the opening of its new location at 3600 Gulfway Drive in Port Arthur.



Hispanic Business Council



The Hispanic Business Council has been growing and is preparing to grow even more in 2022. They have monthly meetings that include different speakers that get to talk to the council about different topics in relation to business and community needs. On Thursday, Oct. 14, they had Kevin Nectoux, Senior Vice President of Commercial Banking with Hancock Whitney, talk about business and commercial loans. Erika Banda Meza was the interpreter for this event and translated documents to Spanish for the Hispanic Business Council's meeting. In attendance were business owners from SETX and people that work in various positions in businesses in our area. The meeting ended with networking, pictures and getting nonmembers more information about being part of The Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce as well as the Hispanic Business Council. Greater things are coming for the Chamber in 2022, and we are excited to see people motivated to make it happen.

Raquel Ochoa

Toasted Yolk debuts in Port Arthur

The Port Arthur community now has a new “go-to destination for scratch-made food and the best service in town” after The Toasted Yolk Cafe made its debut on Monday, Nov. 8, shared Franchisee Bret Baumgartner.

Located near Central Mall at 7675 Memorial Blvd., the 5,600-square-foot breakfast, brunch and lunch destination features full bar service, online ordering, multiple delivery partnerships, 10 flat-screen TVs and a scratch kitchen. Plus, to tie in its commitment and pride for the Port Arthur community, a local artist is set to paint two different murals inside the new restaurant.

Port Arthur’s new Toasted Yolk will be open every day from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. In an effort to better serve the hard-working oil refinery workers in the Port Arthur community, the new location is the only one systemwide with these extended early hours.

“I recently opened a Toasted Yolk in Beaumont and the community loves it,

so I couldn’t be more thrilled to bring one to Port Arthur,” said Baumgartner. “In addition to the best food and service in town, the new restaurant will have an amazing atmosphere that will be perfect for enjoying brunchy booze with friends and delicious food with your family. Our scratch-made food is guaranteed fresh, so you won’t find a microwave anywhere in the restaurant. We are even going to open the restaurant extra early for locals that have an early start time for work. We can’t wait to open and celebrate with everyone next week!”

The Toasted Yolk offers a one-of-a-kind breakfast, brunch and lunch experience. With fan favorites like its famous Churro Donuts, Cowboy Scramble, world-renowned shrimp and grits, a line-up of eggs Benedict creations known famously on their menu as Arnolds, club sandwiches, soups, salads and more, the chef-driven menu is unmatched in quality and freshness.



And, of course, it’s never too early to get “toasted.” Guests can enjoy a full bar with everything from classic mimosas, frozen Bellinis and bloody Marys to Rise ‘N’ Shine Punch and Jackie’s

Morning Rita.

For more information, visit thetoastedyolk.com and follow The Toasted Yolk on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Are you getting the **MOST** out of your Marketing?



Every week, **RADIO** reaches **MORE** consumers than TV



Source: The Total Audience Report, Nielsen, Q1 2015
Weekly Reach A18+ (Percent Of Population)



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High school seniors can apply now for Student of Integrity scholarships

Honest, hard-working students looking for financial assistance can start applying now to the 2022 Student of Integrity Scholarship Program administered by the Better Business Bureau Serving Southeast Texas (BBB) and the BBB Education Foundation.

BBB initiated the program in 2019, awarding a total of \$35,000 in scholarships to 14 local students over the last three years. This spring, BBB Consumer Education Foundation of BBB Southeast Texas will award six \$2,500 scholarships to high school students who personify and communicate ethics in the real world, as demonstrated through community service, personal integrity and academic accomplishments. The scholarships will be awarded to qualifying high school seniors that reside in the following counties: Chambers, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Newton, Orange, Tyler and the Bolivar Peninsula.

BBB President and CEO Liz Friedrichs stated, “BBB is honored to recognize and support local students that are our future workforce, who stand out for their activities and choices in school, home and the community. Through the generosity of local accredited businesses, we can again offer our 2022 Student of Integrity scholarships.”

Winners will be selected by inde-

pendent judges chosen by BBB. Judges will select the scholarship recipients based on their leadership, contributions to their communities and schools, personal integrity, academic accomplishments, letter of reference and written essay.

- Begin the application process. Visit <https://www.bbb.org/local/0845/setx-student-scholarships> to review criteria, eligibility and application.

- Review the scholarship checklist. Before applying, students are advised to review the scholarship rules and regulations at <https://www.bbb.org/local/0845/setx-student-scholarships/> about to make sure their application will meet the scholarship guidelines.

- Submit the application. It must be submitted by March 7, 2022.

- Winners will be notified in April and recognized on June 9, 2022, at the BBB Torch Awards at the Beaumont Civic Center.

Contact Marketing and Events Director Candace Carver-Brooks with any questions or issues with the online process.

About BBB

For more than 100 years, the Better Business Bureau has been “helping people find businesses, brands and charities they can trust.” Before doing business, check companies out by visiting: <http://www.bbb.org>. Call BBB: (409) 835-5348 to learn more.

The long-term outlook for the Texas economy



The Economist

with
M. Ray Perryman

The COVID-19 pandemic led to significant economic disruption, but the Texas economy continues to recover. Recently released October data indicate that the seasonally adjusted Texas unemployment rate continues to fall and now stands at 5.4%. Texas added 56,600 jobs for the month and has almost recovered to pre-pandemic levels. While issues such as supply-chain challenges and inflation will likely linger over the coming months, the long-term outlook for the state remains favorable.

One reason that Texas will do well is the energy sector, which is a major source of jobs and investment not only in producing areas, but across the state. Even though drilling activity has been sluggish in responding to recent price levels, oil and gas will remain crucial to future energy dynamics for decades to come. Over the long term, the industry

will grow, enhancing business activity in the state. While climate issues must be addressed, the simple math of global expansion and fuel requirements will assure a vital, albeit evolving, role for fossil fuels for the foreseeable future.

Another pattern favoring expansion is the state's relatively young and growing population. The state's 15.9% increase in population between 2010 and 2020 was more than double the U.S. rate, due partly to births and partly to in-migration from other parts of the U.S. and elsewhere. Growth in the number of young people positions Texas well for future opportunities (as long as sufficient attention and resources are directed toward ensuring top-quality education from K-12 through higher education and technical training).

Our latest long-term forecast for the Texas economy indicates gains in real gross product at a 3.43% annual pace, leading to an increase from approximately \$1.7 trillion in 2020 to more than \$4.0 trillion in 2045. Nearly 6.8 million net new jobs are expected to be generated over the period, a 1.72% annual rate of growth. Total employment in 2045 is projected to reach 19.5 million. Real retail sales and real per-



sonal income are expected to increase at 3.48% and 3.57% rates, respectively.

The services sector (including professional and business services, education, healthcare, accommodations, and food services) will be a major driver of job growth. The wholesale and retail trade segment is also expected to add substantial numbers of jobs. Real gross product expansion will likely be concentrated in mining, services, and manufacturing.

Prior to the pandemic, Texas was among the most rapidly growing states in the nation. Although the economy has suffered a notable setback, much of the lost ground has been recouped. There are challenges (such as education, infrastructure, restrictive social legislation, and major demographic shifts), but the assets and composition of the state economy suggest that it will experience substantial expansion for decades to come. Stay safe!

Del Papa Distributing to match up to \$50k in support of Southeast Texas Food Bank

Del Papa Distributing Company announced Nov. 16 that the company will match up to \$50,000 in donations to the Southeast Texas Food Bank through the end of the year.

According to Del Papa, the matching funds represent a "strong commitment in support of the Southeast Texas Food Bank's efforts to provide easy access to nutritional food to the thousands of residents facing food insecurity in this region." At a time when demand created by the COVID-19 pandemic continues to stretch the organization's resources to the limit, the company wants to remind local residents, "It is important to support a group that gives back to our community in such an impactful and important way."

"The economic recovery in our area continues, but the demand for our services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is still great," said Barbara Newhouse, President and CEO of the Southeast Texas Food Bank. "The Donation Match program is a tremendous

opportunity to help us provide nutritious meals for thousands of our neighbors throughout our eight-county service area. On behalf of the Southeast Texas Food Bank, our staff and our Board of Directors, thank you for helping us lead the fight to end hunger in Southeast Texas."

Del Papa Distributing, founded in Galveston in 1910, "understands and appreciates the commitment of the Southeast Texas Food Bank and its focus on addressing food insecurity issues in our community."

"The mission of the Southeast Texas Food Bank to provide help and nourishment to our neighbors in need is ongoing," said Peter Williamson, VP Corporate Relations & Communication for Del Papa Distributing. "The



economic impact in our area due to COVID is creating even stronger pressures on those already living on the margins and worrying about feeding their families or themselves. This Donation Match program seeks to double the value of every dollar raised through all donations."

Learn more about Del Papa Distributing at delpapadistributing.com.

Learn more about the Southeast Texas Food Bank and how to support its efforts at setxfoodbank.org.

About Del Papa Distributing Company

In 2010, Del Papa Distributing celebrated its 100th business anniversary. From its founding by Italian immigrant Omero Del Papa Sr. in Galveston, in 1910, to its current operations distributing a variety of national, regional and local beer brands from three distribution centers serving 17 Texas counties along the Texas Gulf Coast, Del Papa has remained committed to supporting and strengthening the many communities in which its customers and employees live. Del Papa Distributing still speaks today to those "old-fashioned values of quality, honesty, integrity and work ethic." "If anything," the company touts, "these ideals have grown stronger over the course of a century."

On your mark, get set, win

Perhaps because educator John Callahan was my football coach at Beaumont High School in the 1960s, I became a firm believer in mastering the fundamentals of any practiced skill. Apart from being exceptionally wise



Heat and Humanity

with Stephen 'doc' Watson

and having a wicked sense of humor, Coach Callahan drilled his players to the point where they didn't have to think about their basic skills, thus enabling them to work on advanced, winning techniques. Working and consulting in the fields of conflict management and customer relations for the last 20 years has only reinforced my belief in continually reviewing and practicing the first, essential skills upon which we can build success. Nothing sturdy is built on shaky ground, but a firm foundation can support a lifetime of successes.

So, when dealing with upset, emotional, or angry clients or customers, here are a few bedrock, fundamental

skills and techniques to assist in the challenge of diffusing tense situations and, perhaps, turning them in your favor. True, not all conflicts and disputes can be resolved, but many can be minimized and managed to the point that an ongoing, working relationship can be salvaged. Fact of the matter is, a conflict well managed can create a stronger relationship than had a conflict never arisen!

Job One is keeping a cool head and managing our own emotions. Allowing ourselves to get caught up in someone else's drama is akin to accepting their invitation to join them in a fruitless anger dance. It's as if in their agitated, frustrated state they cast their drama lure in our direction, and we willingly take their bait. Now we're hooked, and they begin to play us like an angry marlin. Whether they did it intentionally like a savvy lawyer's courtroom tactic doesn't matter. What matters is that we've surrendered our ability to think



clearly and strategically. We've simply handed them the win from the opening bell. They're angry, and now we've allowed ourselves to become angry, truly a recipe for a lose/lose situation.

Suggestion 1: Refuse to lose emotional control. Know your hot buttons

and quickly recognize when your body alerts you that you are responding emotionally. Begin to breathe deeply and slowly, open your fists, relax your shoulders and resist the urge to tense up in the "fight or flight" mode. Mentally repeat to yourself, "Oh, no you

The Board Room where businesses meet

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Protect Your Small Business from Cybersecurity Attacks

Follow these steps to prevent your business from cybersecurity risks before you are attacked.



The good news is businesses are effectively using the internet to conduct commerce. The bad news is bad actors are using the internet to commit crimes against businesses.

You don't have to be a large corporation in America to be vulnerable to cybersecurity attacks. In 2020 alone, there were over 700 thousand attacks against small businesses, with damages totaling 2.8 billion dollars and the numbers continue to rise every year. Fortunately, there are ways that you can strengthen your business against a cyberattack to minimize financial losses and reduce risks for employees.

Ransomware is a specific type of malware that infects and restricts access to a computer until a ransom is paid. Ransomware is usually delivered through phishing emails and it exploits unpatched vulnerabilities in software. SBA and its resource partners offer events tailored to help you consider how a cyberattack might impact your operations and determine how you can prepare before an attack is made.

How Small Businesses Can Prevent and Prepare for a Cybersecurity Attack

Here are some steps small businesses can take to prepare for ransomware attacks:

- Train your employees. Employees

and emails are a leading cause of data breaches for small businesses because they are a direct path into your systems. Training employees on basic internet best practices can go a long way in preventing cyberattacks. The Department of Homeland Security's Cyber Security and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Stop Ransomware website and "Stop.Think.Connect" campaign provides small business owners free training to help employees prevent attacks.

- Putting a system in place to back up critical business data. Your data should be backed up regularly and should be accessible off-site, making cloud data solutions ideal options and unplugging backup drives from the internet.
- Use antivirus software and keep it updated automatically. Make sure each of your business's computers is equipped with antivirus software and antispyware and updated regularly. Such software is readily available online from a variety of vendors. All software vendors regularly provide patches and updates to their products to correct security problems and improve functionality. Configure all software to install updates automatically.
- Secure your networks. Safeguard

your Internet connection by using a firewall and encrypting information. If you have a Wi-Fi network, make sure it is secure and hidden. To hide your Wi-Fi network, set up your wireless access point or router so it does not broadcast the network name, known as the Service Set Identifier (SSID). Password-protect access to the router. Cyber-attacks on small businesses are on the rise and so are the costs to recover after a cyber-attack. Identifying and managing threats to your business data will prevent you from becoming the next easy target.

Understanding the Threat

Small businesses are attractive targets because they have information that cybercriminals want, and they typically lack the security infrastructure of larger businesses.

According to an SBA survey, 88% of small business owners felt their business was vulnerable to a cyber-attack. Yet many businesses can't afford professional IT solutions, have limited time to devote to cybersecurity, or don't know where to begin.

Start by learning about common cyber threats, understanding where your business is vulnerable, and taking steps to improve your cybersecurity.

— Mark Madrid

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won't! You won't trick me into joining your drama dance! I got this! Just watch how I can keep my cool. I'm driving this bus!" Practice this until it just becomes what you do without having to think about it or having to go back and try to recover lost emotional ground. Remember the new-habit mantra: "Effort – Repetition, Effort – Repetition." We have to make the effort to acquire new skills, and we have to practice them until we internalize them and they become a part of who we are, not just what we try to remember to do. Unconscious competence is our goal.

Suggestion 2: Resist the urge to reply too quickly. Most upset customers/clients/employees just want a full

hearing of their grievances. Interrupting them is not only counterproductive but can throw gas on their drama fire. Another benefit of not speaking too quickly is it allows us to pay full attention to what they're saying. Instead of tuning out and working on our rebuttal, which we often blurt out impulsively, stay present and focused on what they're saying. Doing so lets them know they have our full attention. It's been my experience after having worked with hundreds of upset clients that when remaining quiet but attentive and allowing them to fully vent, an upset client ends up running out of steam and actually apologizing for having gotten so angry! And, better yet, they often restate the situ-

ation and make a point that I would have made in defense! I swear, it's like magic. After having given them a full hearing and expressing neutral body language, I've often heard it go something like this: "Look, doc, I'm sorry to have gotten so worked up. It's just that when I didn't hear back from anyone I was worried my order hadn't been filled. And y'all probably did leave a message, and I should have checked my messages when I got back in town Monday night. Working that message machine just gives me fits." By simply being slow to "make my case" and, instead, giving them a full hearing, they calmed down and became able to think through the situation rationally. Remember, when flushed with

emotions we lose our ability to think clearly. It's not that we don't want to think clearly; we can't think clearly. Remaining present, but quiet, can give them the opportunity to regain their emotional balance.

Regardless of our chosen professional field, we're all in the people business. And, inevitably we experience the "friction" generated in interpersonal relationships. It's just an inescapable fact of life. Studying, acquiring, applying, and practicing people skills is not only essential to effectively dealing with conflict, but those who master those skills have the best of both worlds: less stress and more success – definitely a win/win worth working toward.

Education First Federal Credit Union employees give back this holiday season

Education First Federal Credit Union (EFFCU) employees make a big impact on Giving Tuesday just by wearing jeans. Each week employees can elect to wear blue jeans to work on Friday in exchange for a cash donation that is earmarked toward their Blue Jean Friday Fund.

The fund was created in 2015 and quickly became very popular with employees. The aggregate funds are donated to an organization or multiple organizations each year on Giving Tuesday. Recipients are selected by the "Blue Jean Friday Committee." The committee is comprised of nine EFFCU employees from different branches, which represent the communities they serve. To date, EFFCU employees have donated over \$44,000 to both local and national organizations. This year, they raised over \$13,400.

"EFFCU is proud to announce the 2021 recipients are: Homer Drive Elementary School and The Shorkey Center," the credit union reported in a



news release Nov. 30.

A portion of the funds have been committed to help fund the build of a new playground for students at Homer Drive Elementary School. The front playground at Homer Drive Elementary School is worn down and unusable. The new playground would replace the old one and provide a safe

place for all students to play. It would also be ADA accessible.

The remaining funds are designated for The Shorkey Center to purchase needed supplies, including: a water heater so families can shower before or after aquatic therapy; a new electric safety gate for the preschool playground; a new reception lobby desk;

and new seating for the lobby.

The Shorkey Center specializes in effective individualized educational programs that include early childhood education and therapeutic services focusing on children with special needs.

Visit www.educationfirstfcu.org to learn more about Education First Federal Credit Union.

Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Luncheon

Dr. Dan French, Dean, Lamar University College of Business, addressed a large group Dec. 2 at the Holiday Inn & Suites

Beaumont Plaza for the Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Luncheon sponsored by CommonCents Credit Union. French focused on the supply chain crisis and guests got a behind-the-scenes look at the inner workings of International Paper from Amy Lovoi. Chamber President Bill Allen addressed guests and introduced speakers at the event.





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