



A new preschool and fellowship hall for Memorial Lutheran Church is one of several projects under construction around Katy.

Businesses navigate complex building process

Permit requirements cause some Katy businesses to delay opening their doors

BY **DANICA SMITHWICK**

The commercial permitting process in Harris County is meant to ensure public welfare and safety, according

to county officials. But some Katy-area business owners have said the system is inefficient and overly complicated, leading to long delays

before the business owners can open their doors.

Robert Matheson, deputy chief

CONTINUED ON **38**

Katy's cost of construction

Fewer technical students, undocumented labor play role in ongoing labor shortage

BY **AMY DENNEY AND BETHANY KNIPP**

The ripple effect of the construction industry's shrinking labor pool is beginning to reach businesses in the Greater Houston area.

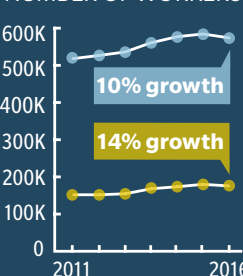
"Over the last five years, it's created a large issue for us just with regard to the amount of work that was starting to go on in Houston with the oil and gas [industry] booming and then the influx of people moving to Houston and the growth of the Houston market," said Todd Granato, president of Webber LLC's commercial division and former president of PepperLawson Construction, which

CONTINUED ON **40**

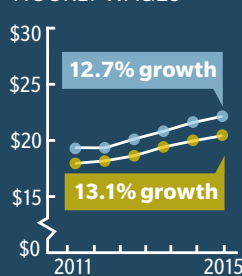
GROWING SHORT

The number of construction workers is increasing across the state, as well as the average hourly wages even as the number of skilled workers is beginning to decline.

NUMBER OF WORKERS



HOURLY WAGES



SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER



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Now Open, Coming Soon & more



10 TO-DO LIST
See events from the Katy area



27 BUSINESS FEATURE
World Theater



31 FIRST LOOK
OMG! Burger



34 PET GUIDE
Local pet businesses in Katy

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PUBLISHERS AND FOUNDERS

John and Jennifer Garrett

PUBLISHER-HOUSTON METRO

Jason Culpepper

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Kristina Shackelford

GENERAL MANAGER

Casey Mitchell, cmitchell@communityimpact.com

EDITORIAL

CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER David Arkin

MANAGING EDITOR Jocelyn Kerr

EDITOR Amelia Brust

REPORTER Imani McGarrell

COPY EDITOR Richard Guerrero

STAFF WRITERS Shawn Arraji, Wendy Cawthon, Anna Dembowski, Emily Donaldson, Vanessa Holt, Wade Kerr, Nora Olabi, Danica Smithwick, Hannah Zedaker

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Tracy Maness, Bethany Knipp, Rosemary Smith

ADVERTISING

SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Tracy Drewa

CUSTOMER SERVICE SPECIALIST Courtney Cottom

DESIGN

CREATIVE DIRECTOR Derek Sullivan

SENIOR ART PRODUCTION MANAGER Jenny Abrego

GRAPHIC DESIGNER Anya Gallant

STAFF DESIGNERS Angie Calderon, Evelia Gramajo, Tessa Hoeft, Sadie Long, Stephanie Torres, Ronald Winters

BUSINESS

GROUP PUBLISHER Traci Rodriguez

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER Claire Love

CIRCULATION MANAGER Lauren Brown

ABOUT US

John and Jennifer Garrett began *Community Impact Newspaper* in 2005 in Pflugerville, Texas. The company's mission is to build communities of informed citizens and thriving businesses through the collaboration of a passionate team.

CONTACT US

10701 Corporate Drive, Ste. 300
Stafford, TX 77477 • 281-469-6181

communityimpact.com

PRESS RELEASES ktynews@communityimpact.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS communityimpact.com/subscriptions

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Introducing the To-do list

This month, you will discover a bright new feature (see Page 10) called the To-do list. We hope this page will be your go-to destination each month for everything happening in our community.

There is so much happening in our community every month, but those happenings go beyond local festivals. Although we love celebrating concerts and fairs, which have been a staple of our Community calendar page, there's more happening in our community, and we wanted to find a way to feature that content. The To-do list is meant to capture all of those moments.

You will find events on this page, but

you'll also discover important upcoming meetings, special holidays and themed days.

The idea is that these are all local happenings you can go to in our community each month that we think are worthy of being put on your own to-do list.

As part of the launch of this page, you will notice that our business and restaurant profiles are now starting on Page 27. This was done so all of our news content could be featured closer to the front, and all of our lighter content, such as our profiles and real estate content, would be further back in the edition. We think this improves the organization of the newspaper.



Casey

Casey Mitchell

GENERAL MANAGER

cmitchell@communityimpact.com

MEET THE EDITOR



Amelia Brust

EDITOR

abrust@communityimpact.com

Do you have a question about how local government works or something going on in town? Email ktynews@communityimpact.com.

Meet the new Community Impact Katy edition editor, Amelia Brust

As the new editor for *Community Impact Newspaper's* Katy edition, I would like to introduce myself. I was previously senior reporter for our Sugar Land/Missouri City edition, and am so excited to now be leading the Katy editorial pages. If you have a story idea or question, my inbox is always open at abrust@communityimpact.com. Whether in the city proper or the unincorporated areas, if it is happening in Katy, I want to know about it.

I will ensure we continue to write reliable coverage of the community's residential and commercial development, such as the update on the new Asian shopping hub on Page 15. I am committed to covering both community pillars like Katy ISD on Page 23 and new arrivals in our Impacts section on Page 6. This is a wide locality, so I appreciate feedback from readers like you who may see things we do not. We are also planning future opportunities for readers to meet with me and other *Community Impact Newspaper* staff members. Stay tuned!

FEATURED STORIES

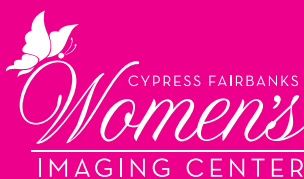
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1 **Women's Imaging Center at Cy-Fair Hospital (FM 1960 at Jones Road)

***Genetic testing available here**

2 **Cy-Fair Urgent Care & Imaging Center (at Spring Cypress & Grant)

3 Cy-Fair Emergency & Imaging Center (at Barker Cypress & FM 529)

4 Cy-Fair Emergency & Imaging Center (Beltway 8 & Tanner Rd.)

IMPACTS

Businesses that have recently opened, are coming soon, relocating or expanding.



NOW OPEN

1 Katy Hustle opened May 15 at 23441 Clay Road, Katy. Owner Tony Luprete began the youth basketball program in 2011, and this is the first permanent location. The 14,000-square-foot indoor facility will house two basketball courts and offer training programs for boys and girls of all skill levels in grades 4-12. Boys teams are also available while Luprete said he hopes to add girls teams in the future. Summer camps for boys and girls of all skill levels will also be offered. 832-245-7181. www.katyhustle.com

2 Leslie's Pool Supply's soft opening was May 5 at 5102 FM 1463, Ste. 1000, Fulshear. The store sells swimming pool equipment, pool chemicals, cleaning supplies, toys and lounge chairs. Services also include free water tests, free in-store repairs of pool cleaners, and at-home installations and repairs of other equipment. A grand opening is scheduled for May 18-22. 281-574-9245. www.lesliespool.com

3 Raising Cane's opened May 9 at 9730 Gaston Road, Katy. The Louisiana-based fast-food chain is known for chicken fingers, french fries, Texas toast and signature sauce. 281-574-3779. www.raisingcanes.com

4 Sushi 9 opened a second location April 24 at 1251 Pin Oak Road, Katy. Unlike its original spot on South Mason Road, which is all-you-can-eat, the new location features traditional a la carte dining. Sushi 9 serves sushi and shabu-shabu, a dish of meat and vegetables boiled and served in a pot at the table. The restaurant also has beer and wine, and takeout is available. 281-391-8888

5 Top Dog Grooming opened Feb. 20 at 402 W. Grand Parkway S., Unit 109, Katy. The business offers grooming for dogs, including full haircuts, minigrooming services, such as trims around the face, nail trims and baths. 832-437-2975. www.facebook.com/Top-Dog-Grooming-Katy-1843285052581404

6 V's Barbershop held a soft opening May 17 at 6420 FM 1463 Road, Ste. 300, Katy. The location will offer services, including straight-edge razor shaves and boys and

men's haircuts. This will be the third location to open in Texas. 281-346-8584. www.vbarbershop.com

7 Wild Birds Unlimited opened May 9 at 23930 Westheimer Parkway, Ste. 115. Brian Stierwalt owns the franchise location and operates it with his daughter Kayla. The store caters to birdwatchers—not pet owners—and sells supplies to attract birds, including feeders, seed, bird baths and birdhouses. No live birds are sold in the store. 832-437-4937. www.katy.wbu.com

COMING SOON

8 Aldi will open a store at 5840 FM 1463 Road, Fulshear, in June, according to a company spokesperson. The German discount supermarket chain sells primarily store-brand products in a warehouse-style layout. The company is expanding its U.S. presence and has two Katy locations. www.aldi.us/en

9 Bambu Katy will hold its grand opening May 20 at 9555 Spring Green Blvd., Ste. E, Katy. The franchise is owned by Tommy Ly and his wife, Phyllis, and sells boba tea and coffee drinks as well as Vietnamese che desserts, which are made with ingredients, such as sweet beans, puddings and fruits. The store will also have a Comic Con theme, with comic book-inspired decor, board games and anime cartoons streamed on TVs. Bambu Katy will partner with Spring-based The Gaming Goats for in-store events. 832-559-0588. www.facebook.com/BambuKaty

10 Cane Island Storage will open in May at 27748 Hwy. 90, Katy. Owned by Matt Hughes, the self-storage facility will start with 262 units and 60 RV parking spaces, with the potential to expand later. This is the first Cane Island Storage location. 281-574-4777. caneislandstorage.com

11 Fleet Feet will open a store in La Centera at Cinco Ranch, 23501 Cinco Ranch Blvd., Ste. J120, Katy, on July 1. This is the fifth area location for the Houston-based company. Fleet Feet sells running apparel and shoes, and features local running club information on its website. The stores also sponsor run clubs and organize events. www.fleetfeethouston.com



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12 Tigers Martial Arts Group is opening a second Katy location this summer at 27278 Cinco Ranch Blvd., Katy. The martial arts studio hosts taekwondo classes for students from 4 years of age to adults. The black belt program also includes yongmoodo. Classes are held Monday through Thursday as well as Friday and Saturday. The first location is at 1717 S. Mason Road, Katy. 281-599-8000. www.tigersmartialartsgroup.com

13 Wellspring Pediatric Dentistry will open by July 1 at 2780 FM 1463, Ste. 203, Katy. Owned by dentist Nisha Mehta, the practice offers comprehensive pediatric dental services, including cleaning, exams, preventative care, extractions and in-office sedation. 281-849-3003. www.wellspringpediatricdentistry.com

RELOCATIONS

14 Babaloo Bar and Grill moved to a new location in March at 25757 Westheimer Parkway, Ste. 130, Katy. The business is also under the new ownership of Carlos and Eleonora Mejias. The pair were customers at the old location and decided to become involved when the opportunity arose. The business features a new bistro gourmet menu. It includes items, such as steaks, empanadas and traditional Cuban dishes like ropavieja. The new Babaloo Bar and Grill location also offers a more seating and dance floor. 832-437-8092. www.babalooabarandgrill.com

15 Frank's Specialty Pharmacy relocated from 3100 Broadway St., Houston, to 24554 Kingsland Blvd., Katy, in March. Formerly Azteca Pharmacy, the business will still be owned and operated by Francisco Rivera. Frank's Specialty Pharmacy offers free delivery options and accepts most private medical insurance plans. 713-644-3600.

16 Serene Beans is moving to a new location at 1933 East Ave., across the street from Katy City Park. A grand reopening celebration is planned for June 10 with a crawfish broil, samples from Great Harvest Bread Company and live music from Sydney Bryant. Currently located at 1512 Avenue C, Katy, the coffee shop also sells inspirational gifts, such as books and wooden plaques. 281-391-4480. www.serenebeans.com

COMPILED BY **AMELIA BRUST AND IMANI MCGARRELL**
News or questions about Katy?
Email us at ktynews@communityimpact.com.

17 Katy Hardware relocated to 559 Pin Oak Road, Katy, on April 1. The new store has about 12,000 square feet of space, compared to the old location, which only measured about 5,000 square feet. The business has some new products, including a wider selection line of cleaning and gardening supplies. It will also open a rental department within about a month for equipment ranging from cleaning and construction tools to home entertainment devices, such as popcorn makers and margarita machines. 281-391-3437. www.katyhardware.com

NEW OWNERSHIP

18 Pane E Vino Trattoria & Pizzeria, 8945 S. Fry Road, Katy, is under new ownership. The Italian restaurant opened in 2014 and was previously under the ownership of Dan Monson. Monson sold the restaurant to new owner Lucy Ortiz in order to focus more time on his other business ventures. 281-391-2222. www.panevinokatytexas.com

ANNIVERSARIES

19 Portrait Dental reached its first anniversary April 11. Located at 27131 Cinco Ranch Blvd., Ste. 250, the practice offers general dental care and orthodontics. Portrait Dental also provides services through its partnership with Hope Impacts, a Houston-based program that services the needs of uninsured and homeless individuals. 281-712-6191. www.portraitdental.com

20 Sertinos Cafe celebrated its first anniversary March 18 at 25707 Westheimer Parkway, Katy. The cafe serves specialty organic coffee from Oregon as well as various sandwiches, salads, soups, ice cream and smoothies. The business has a drive-thru along with indoor and outdoor seating. 281-769-2066. www.sertinoskaty.com

FEATURED IMPACT — NOW OPEN



European Wax Center opened its Katy-The Reserve location April 16 at 1708 Spring Green Blvd., Ste. 185, Katy. The location offers hair removal services for men and women, including eyebrow and full-body options. Customers can book appointments online. First-time guests can get a complimentary eyebrow, underarm or bikini line waxing, or 50 percent off either a bikini Brazilian wax or a bikini full wax. European Wax Center has two other locations in Katy. 832-323-9299. www.waxcenter.com/tx-katy-the-reserve



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IMPACTS

Businesses that have recently opened, are coming soon, relocating or expanding.



NOW OPEN

1 Katy Elite Chiropractic held a soft opening April 19 and is planning a grand opening June 12. Owned by Ammon Zukerman, the practice is located at 416 Park Grove Drive, Katy. Katy Elite Chiropractic treats back pain, injuries and sports-related pain, sciatica and spinal problems in children. Kinesio taping and laser therapy for damaged tissue are also available, among other services. 281-994-9020. www.katylitechiropractic.com

2 MidiCi The Neapolitan Pizza Company opened May 5 at 21784 I-10, Ste. 100, Katy. Owner Brandon Gawthorp said the franchise restaurant is located near

the CarMax dealership between North Westgreen Boulevard and North Mason Road. The menu features thin-crust Neapolitan-style pizza, burrata cheese plates, salads, desserts and appetizers. MidiCi also features a full bar as well as espresso drinks. MidiCi has three stores in the Greater Houston area. 281-394-9739. www.mymidici.com

COMING SOON

3 Kiddie Cuts and Beyond, a children's hair salon, is set to open June 10 at 2004 S. Mason Road, Katy. Owner Yarubi Chen said the business will offer haircuts for boys and girls, as well as video games and iPads for customers to use at the store. A private area

will also be available for style parties with features, such as makeup, costumes and karaoke stage. 832-739-8829

4 A new **Wal-Mart Supercenter** will open May 31 at 22850 Morton Ranch Road, Katy. The store will have a pharmacy, photo center and garden center in addition to its signature apparel, home goods, electronics and other products. 346-307-8163. www.walmart.com.

NEW MANAGEMENT

5 Brian Maness became the owner of **AlphaGraphics** in Katy on March 16, according to Store Manager John Mattei. Located at 20302 Park Row Drive, Ste. 800, the business provides printing, design and signage services for primarily commercial and corporate needs, as well as for individual consumers. 281-944-4271. www.katyalphagraphics.com

NEW OWNERSHIP

6 Dimassi's Mediterranean Kitchen at 22453 I-10, Katy, has been under new ownership since April 1. Rana Hayek now runs the buffet restaurant, which sells Mediterranean foods, including kabobs, falafel and baba ghanoush. Catering service is also available. 281-574-5977. <http://dimassi.com>

ANNIVERSARIES

7 Bling Out Loud Apparel and Gifts reached its first anniversary May 14 at 623 S. Mason Road, Katy. The company merges Bling Out Loud and SewGeekAustin, two home-based, women-owned online businesses. The store offers custom apparel with rhinestones and spangles, handmade gifts, screenprinting and do-it-yourself supplies. To mark the occasion, the store will hold a celebration June 17, in time for Father's Day, with refreshments and a class for families to learn how to use a silhouette cameo machine. The cutting device makes custom shapes, which can be used for sten-cils or other projects. 832-786-1646. www.blingoutloudkaty.com

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COURTESY MIDI-CI THE NEAPOLITAN PIZZA COMPANY



COURTESY WALMART



COURTESY ALPHAGRAPHS

8 KD Music & Arts, at 20225 I-10, Katy, will celebrate its 25th anniversary June 6. The store sells a wide range of instruments, including woodwinds, brass, percussion and strings. Lessons, including vocal lessons, are available. Owner Roland Diaz said the store will hold its regular spring recital for students May 27. The free event is open to the public and will take place at The Church Without Walls, formerly Brookhol-low Baptist Church, 5725 Queenston Blvd., Houston. 281-647-6996. www.kdmusicandarts.com

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LOCAL EVENTS



MAY 27

Radiokaty.com Battle of the Bands

Artists compete in RadioKaty.com's first Battle of the Bands contest at The Wildcatter Saloon. 2-7 p.m. \$10 (ages 13 and older), free (ages 12 and younger). 26913 I-10, Katy. www.radiokaty.com

COURTESY RADIOKATY.COM BATTLE OF THE BANDS

MAY 23

Pages by the Pint

Katy Branch Library hosts the May book club Pages by the Pint event at No Label Brewing Co. Participants discuss "Fates and Furies" by Lauren Groff. Participants can pick up a copy of Groff's book at the library. 8-9:30 p.m. No Label Brewing Co., 5351 First St., Katy. 281-391-3509. www.hcpl.net

MAY 23

Family sign painting party

3 Little Birds Custom Signs hosts a night of painting, drinking and eating at Growler USA. Admission includes painting supplies and a drink. \$45. 6-9 p.m. Growler USA, 1443 FM 1463, Ste. 100, Katy. 281-396-4277. www.facebook.com/events/358168141250723/

COURTESY BRITANY JOHANSEN



✓ To-do list

Your ultimate local guide for events, business openings, meetings and more in the months of May and June

Find more or submit Katy events at communityimpact.com/kty-calendar.

Event organizers can submit local events online to be considered for the print edition. Submitting details for consideration does not guarantee publication.



LIVE MUSIC

There are many places in Katy to get your live music fix month over the next few weeks. From country to soul, there is something for everyone.

MAY 25

Chris Boise at Midnight Rodeo

JUNE 1

Junior Gordon Band at Mo's Place

JUNE 10

Fuzzy Side Up at the 510 Bar

JUNE 10

Sydney Bryant at Serene Beans

JUNE 16

Joe Nichols at Mo's Place

JUNE 22

Skinny Kravitz at Agave Rio

COURTESY SKINNY KRAVITZ

MEETINGS

CITY COUNCIL MEETING | JUNE 12

901 Avenue C, Katy.
281-391-4800 | www.cityofkaty.com
Meeting begins at 6:30 p.m.

KATY ISD BOARD MEETING | JUNE 19

6301 S. Stadium Lane, Katy
281-396-6000 | www.katysd.org
Meeting begins at 6:30 p.m.

MAY 29

Government offices closed

Government offices in Waller, Fort Bend and Harris counties as well as the city of Katy are closed for Memorial Day. Law enforcement and emergency services will remain open. All Katy ISD schools will be closed.

MAY 29

Howls Moving Castle

Alamo Drafthouse presents a subtitled "Howl's Moving Castle," Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki's animated film. Tickets available online and at the door. Children age 6 and older must be accompanied by an adult. 7:30 p.m. Alamo Drafthouse, 531 S. Mason Road, Katy. 281-492-6900. www.drafthouse.com.

See a list of full events at www.communityimpact.com/katy/event-calendar/may

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LIBRARY EVENTS

Public libraries in Harris and Fort Bend counties are hosting multiple events in May and June, including the following selections in Katy:

KATY BRANCH LIBRARY
5414 Franz Road, Katy.
281-391-3509 • www.hcpl.net

MAY
22 Advanced ESL conversation class 5:30 p.m.
31 Knotty & Nice Club 1 p.m.

JUNE
10 Beginning Genealogy One-On-One 3 p.m.
13 Young adult book club 4:30 p.m.
20 Mick Corley Music Show 2:30 p.m.

MAUD SMITH MARKS BRANCH LIBRARY
1815 Westgreen Blvd., Katy.
281-492-8592 • www.hcpl.net

MAY
23 Color Me Relaxed 2 p.m.
30 Resumes on Microsoft Word 10 a.m.

JUNE
10 Advanced Microsoft Word 10 a.m.
12 Citizenship class 6:30 p.m.
20 Twitter for adults 10 a.m.

CINCO RANCH BRANCH LIBRARY
2620 Commercial Center Blvd., Katy • 281-395-1311
www.fortbend.lib.tex.us

MAY
22-26 International Film Fest (Mon., Tue., Thu. 6 p.m.) (Wed., Fri. 2 p.m.)
31 Web Development Basics 10 a.m.

JUNE
6 Middle school program-Karaoke Revolution 3 p.m.
13 Pajama Night 7 p.m.
21 School age program-Crocodile Encounters 2 p.m.

JUNE 3

Brazilian Country Party

The Brazilian Women Foundation and Next Brazilian Productions and Adonai Houston host a Brazilian-themed event at the Wildcatter Saloon with traditional Brazilian food vendors and performances planned. \$10. 4-11 p.m. The Wildcatter Saloon, 26913 I-10, Katy.
www.nextbrazilian.com



JUNE 3

KW Premier 5K FunRun

Run for a cause with Keller Williams Premier Realty at its third annual event at Villagio Town Center in Cinco Ranch. All proceeds are donated to The Ballard House. Race begins at 8 a.m. \$40 entry. The Ballard House, 22762 Westheimer Parkway, Ste. 430, Katy. 281-220-2100.
www.kwpremier5k.com

COURTESY KELLER WILLIAMS PREMIER REALTY



JUNE 17

No Label Brewing 1st Street 5K beer run

No Label Brewing Co. hosts a 5K run through downtown Katy, followed by a craft beer tasting. 7:30 a.m. \$45 (until June 3), \$55 (June 4 until race day). 5351-A 1st Street, Katy. 281-693-7545.
www.runintexas.com/beerrun

COURTESY KW PREMIER 5K FUNRUN

JUNE 8

Cooking with herbs workshop

Brookwood horticulture staff hosts a workshop and lunch to teach how to grow and cook with herbs. Reservations required. 10:30 a.m. \$19.95. The Shoppes & Café at Brookwood, 1502 FM 1489, Brookshire. 281-375-2100.
brookshireretexas.org/community-events

JUNE 10

Kevin Hart book signing

Actor, comedian and writer Kevin Hart greets fans and signs copies of his new book "I Can't Make This Up" at Katy Books-A-Million. Admission includes a copy of the book. 2 p.m. \$31.82. Katy Books-A-Million, 5000 Katy Mills Circle, Ste. 221, Katy. 281-644-2665.
<http://bit.ly/2r6mZiu>

JUNE 17

Katy market day

Local vendors, food, art and antiques are present at the June Katy Market Day event. Fifty vendors are set to be on-site. The event is hosted by Limited Edition Art & Antiques. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Alief Baptist Church, 906 Avenue A, Katy. 281-391-1993. www.katymarketday.com

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RECENT UPDATES

1 Cane Island Parkway

This project will build the first half of a two-lane concrete boulevard from FM 1463 to I-10. A traffic signal will be installed at the intersection of FM 1463 and Cane Island Parkway. This project will provide access to I-10 and will lessen traffic congestion.

Timeline: summer 2017-spring 2018

Cost: \$9 million

Funding sources: Fort Bend County, city of Katy, Ventana Development

2 Gaston Road project, Phase 1

In order to improve traffic mobility, an existing two-lane asphalt road will be widened to a four-lane concrete boulevard from Katy Flewellen to Greenbusch roads. This project also included the relocation of a 4-inch diameter gas line.

Timeline: summer 2017-spring 2018

Cost: \$9 million

Funding sources: Fort Bend County, NewQuest Properties

3 Greenbusch Road

The road will be converted from a two-lane asphalt road to a four-lane concrete road from Gaston Road to Westheimer Parkway. The project will also include a bridge along Greenbusch Road. Once completed, the project is expected to alleviate traffic and improve mobility in the area.

Timeline: spring 2018-spring 2019

Cost: \$7.8 million

Funding sources: Fort Bend County

COMPLETED PROJECTS



4 Katy Gaston Road

Katy Gaston Road was converted from a two-lane asphalt roadway into four concrete lanes. The road was improved from Summerset Ridge Lane and realigned to connect with FM 1093 in order to improving traffic congestion in the area.

Timeline: summer 2016-spring 2017

Cost: \$1.7 million

Funding sources: Fort Bend County

All information on this page was updated as of 5/16/17. News or questions about these or other local transportation projects? Email us at ktynews@communityimpact.com.



HOW IT WORKS

How does TxDOT prioritize construction?

Although the Texas Department of Transportation funds construction for highways and other major roads in the state right of way, metropolitan planning organizations prioritize project construction.

Texas has 25 metropolitan planning organizations, or MPOs, that create transportation policy, forecast mobility needs, administer regional planning,

and channel state and federal funding for area projects. MPOs include the Houston-Galveston Area Council, the North Central Texas Council of Governments and the Capitol Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

MPOs score project proposals on safety, mobility, environmental quality, economic development, and asset management and operations.

Then the MPO determines the funding and shovel-readiness of a project. If no funding is available and the project is far from being construction-ready, then it is shelved and could be revisited.

Once a project is approved by the MPO, then projects are added to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program or TxDOT's 10-year Unified Transportation Program.



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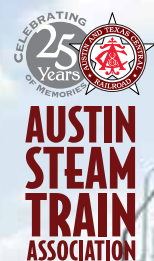


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Buc-ee's is applying for a Guinness world record as the world's longest car wash for the planned car wash at its new Katy location, coming to the West Ten Business Park.

Buc-ee's planning to open world's longest car wash in east Katy

BY IMANI MCGARRELL

The world's longest car wash is coming to Katy as part of the new Buc-ee's gas station and store expected to open in West Ten Business Park near Cane Island later this year.

The 255-foot car wash will accompany a 56,000-square-foot store and about 120 gas pumps, Buc-ee's

General Counsel Jeff Nadalo said.

"Katy is a great city," Nadalo said. "The location along I-10 will complement our other cities in Baytown and Luling that are also along the interstate."

In March 2016, Katy City Council unanimously approved a resolution for the Katy Development Authority to enter an economic development agreement to bring the convenience store and gas station to the area.

"The business climate in the city of Katy has been very welcoming," Nadalo said. "It's important for us

to partner with local officials to successfully bring a new project to a new location."

The company is also in the process of applying for a Guinness world record as the world's longest car wash for the Katy car wash location, he said.

The Katy store will be the fourth Texas location with an accompanying car wash. The other three locations are in Lake Jackson, Richmond and Cypress.

The Katy store will also have a backup power generator, Nadalo said. Buc-ee's officials were able to secure the equipment from Enchanted Rock Ltd. at a reduced cost, he said.

"The entire store and car wash will be operational in the event of power failure," he said.

City officials said the newly constructed overpass at Cane Island Parkway and I-10 will improve access to the gas station and store. The car wash is expected to be complete by late 2017 while the location is set to generate about 200 jobs.

Bel Furniture moving from Houston to new 415,000-square-foot Katy site

BY IMANI MCGARRELL

Houston-based Bel Furniture will open two adjacent buildings, a 74,793-square-foot showroom and a 340,503-square-foot distribution center in Katy, according to a Transwestern representative.

Transwestern is a Texas-based real estate firm specializing in collaborative entrepreneurship, according to a press release. In 2014, the business purchased 75 acres of land at West Ten Business Park located on I-10 and Cane Island Parkway, according

to the release.

"The completion of Cane Island Parkway provides West Ten users immediate access directly from Interstate 10," said Pete Johnston, senior vice president of Transwestern Development Co., in a statement.

Jamal Mollai, owner and founder of Bel Furniture, said the new location will help the company's reach.

"We have been looking for an opportunity to open a large retail and distribution operation in west Houston to serve our expanding

customer base, and West Ten was an ideal fit for us based on the quality of the new buildings, strategic location, visibility and access to Interstate 10," he said.



Katy Asian Town brings new multicultural hub

BY IMANI MCGARRELL

Construction is underway at Katy Asian Town, a new mainstream Asian shopping hub coming to the Greater Katy area.

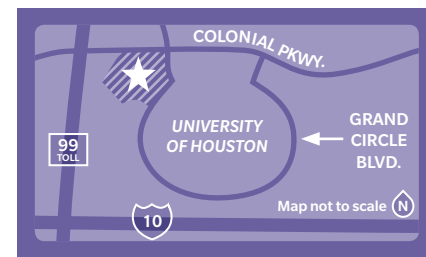
"The demand for a diverse community is increasing in the area," said Josie Lin, leasing broker for the property. "There's a lot of new construction happening, and a lot of people are coming here from different areas of the state."

Katy Asian Town will be located at the intersection of the Grand Parkway and I-10, next to the University of Houston's new 45-acre Katy campus. Katy Asian Town is expected to open in late 2017, and the property features over 15 acres of retail space, three buildings with about 150,000 square feet and parking, Lin said.

Nationwide Asian supermarket chain H Mart will be anchoring the development, Lin said. The store will feature fresh produce, meat and seafood, as well as a food court, according to the Katy Asian Town website. There are two other H Mart locations in the Greater Houston area.

"H Mart is a great representation for Asian communities in the area," Lin said.

Developers hope Katy Asian Town will be a landmark for the city, similar to Chinatown in Houston, she said.



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Economic Outlook Forum speakers talk about job forecasts, growth in Houston

Region's industries respond to needs of an expanding population

BY VANESSA HOLT

Community leaders in Harris County said they feel confident about the region's economic recovery and have initiatives in place to deal with the area's growing population.

The Houston Northwest Chamber of Commerce's annual Economic Outlook Forum was held March 31 at Southwestern Energy's headquarters in Springwoods Village. The forum featured speakers from government, business, education and technology sectors discussing the future of their respective industries in the region.

The Houston metropolitan area population increased by about 125,000 from July 2015 to early 2016 despite zero job growth during that period, said Patrick Jankowski, senior vice president of research at the Greater Houston Partnership.

Jankowski said he is optimistic about Houston's recovery from the oil and gas downturn.

"We're definitely on the mend," Jankowski said. "The worst is behind us in the rearview mirror."

The GHP has forecast more than 29,000 new Houston-area jobs for 2017 and predicts about 60,000 jobs will be added each year beginning in 2018.

Jankowski said part of the reason for this expected recovery is the diversity of job opportunities in the Greater Houston area. While the region lost over 80,000 energy jobs from 2014 to 2016, it added at least 83,000 jobs in health care, hotel, retail and other sectors, he said.

The energy sector will have greater recovery prospects when the price of oil is at least \$60 a barrel, and the region will need that recovery to keep up with growth, he said.

Southwestern Energy CEO Bill Way said in his remarks as keynote speaker the energy industry will continue to play a major role in the economy of the Greater Houston area. Way said he expects a resurgence in energy infrastructure by 2035, with up to \$620 billion in U.S. energy infrastructure projects possible by that time in new pipelines, exports and other projects.

"We have an optimistic view of the energy business going forward," Way said.

"WE'RE DEFINITELY ON THE MEND. THE WORST IS BEHIND US IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR."

— PATRICK JANKOWSKI, GREATER HOUSTON PARTNERSHIP SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH

ADDRESSING GROWTH

Harris County has approved 669 new neighborhoods since Jan. 1, 2014, Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner Jack Cagle said. The growth has led to unprecedented road congestion and a need for expansion and improvements on heavily traveled roads.

Cagle said Phase 2 of the \$99 million Hwy. 249 extension project is slated to be completed Dec. 31, 2019. Meanwhile, the expected completion date for the project to widen



Patrick Jankowski, senior vice president of research at the Greater Houston Partnership, discussed the economic recovery of the region at the March 31 forum.

Kuykendahl Road over Spring Creek is May 17, he said.

Speakers also addressed the challenges that a growing population poses in education and health care.

"We are one of the most diverse [communities]—perhaps the most—in the country, and we need to work to make sure that is an asset and a strength and something we build on," said David Thompson, an attorney at Thompson & Horton LLP, which specializes in education. "Schools are going to be central to how we productively respond to changes that are occurring in the world around us, the state and in the local level."

Ken Janda, the CEO of nonprofit Community Health Choice, discussed the health insurance needs of Texas residents and the future of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Texas has the highest rates of uninsured people in the country, he said.

"For all the faults of the ACA, there are 30 million [American] people now covered who were uninsured," Janda said.

Janda's advice to business owners concerned about further changes to health care coverage for their employees was to remain flexible.

"Keep doing what you are doing now, but be ready to flex when laws change," he said.

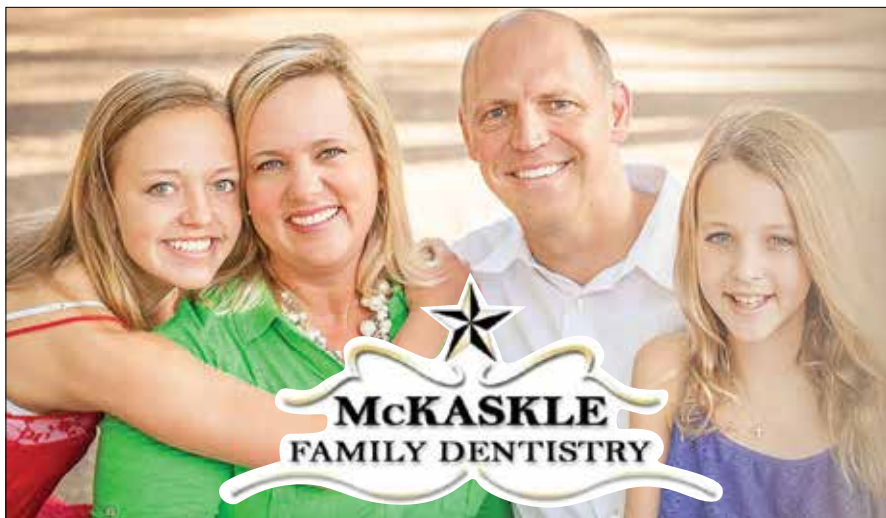
TECHNOLOGY, NATIONAL CONCERNS

With the region diversifying in its approach to job growth, speakers from technology industries weighed in on how the field will create new opportunities and challenges.

Van Lindberg, an attorney at law firm Dykema Cox Smith who specializes in technology issues, discussed the potential of autonomous vehicles in the development of the Houston economy.

James Morrison, an FBI computer scientist at the Houston Cyber Task Force, described how small businesses are vulnerable to avoidable cyberattacks.

"Sixty percent of small businesses collapse after they get hit by a cyberattack," Morrison said.



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Katy-area foster care system seeing placement deficit for children

BY ANNA DEMBOWSKI AND HANNAH ZEDAKER

The number of foster children in need of homes in Fort Bend and Harris counties far outnumbers the number of foster families with rooms available between the same county lines, according to data from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

The most recent DFPS data available shows in the month of March, there were 2,332 children in need of homes in the Harris County foster care system and 119 children in need of homes in the Fort Bend foster care system.

Sameisha Adolph-Frazier, Houston director for Foster in Texas, said she believes the Katy area needs more foster families. Foster in Texas, a division of Austin-based Upbring that operates the Krause Children's Center in Katy, seeks to find homes for foster and adopted children.

"WE SIMPLY NEED MORE FOSTER PARENTS TO HELP SUPPORT THE CHILDREN WHO ARE REMOVED FROM THE COUNTY. EVERYONE HAS TO REALIZE THIS IS A PROBLEM THAT AFFECTS ALL OF US, AND AS SUCH, WE WILL NEED TO HAVE A COMMUNITY RESPONSE."

—LESHIA FISHER, CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR DFPS

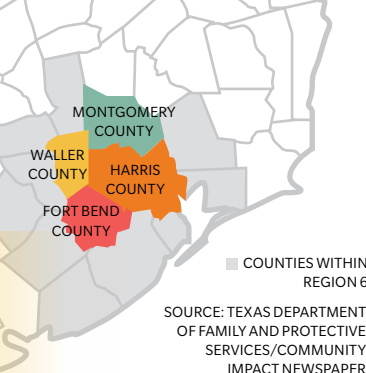
"We have about 65 families total [in Houston], and only five of them come from the Katy area," Adolph-Frazier said. "That tells you there's definitely a deficit in that area and [a need for] making sure we get [out] the word to find families and homes for the children. It's a little bit slower than most areas for whatever reason."

CAPACITY CRISIS

Of the 2,451 children who need homes in Harris and Fort Bend counties in March, 1,465 children were placed in homes within county lines and 709 were placed in other counties within Region 6.

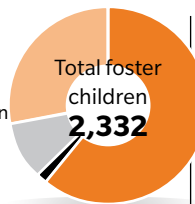
FINDING FOSTER FAMILIES

According to the most recent statistics published by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, about 34 percent of all foster children in Fort Bend County between March 1 and April 7 were able to find foster homes within county lines. In Harris County, 61 percent of foster children were placed in homes within the county.



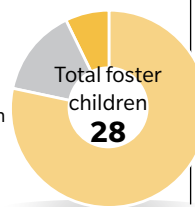
HARRIS COUNTY

61.1% Placed in homes in the county
27.9% Placed outside county, within region
10.8% Placed outside region
0.2% Without placement



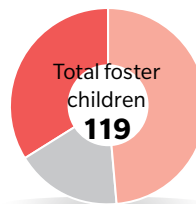
WALLER COUNTY

7.1% Placed in homes in the county
78.6% Placed outside county, within region
14.3% Placed outside region
0% Without placement



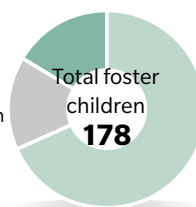
FORT BEND COUNTY

33.6% Placed in homes in the county
48.7% Placed outside county, within region
17.6% Placed outside region
0% Without placement



MONTGOMERY COUNTY

16.3% Placed in homes in the county
68.5% Placed outside county, within region
15.2% Placed outside region
0% Without placement



6—which encompasses 13 counties in southeast Texas. An additional 293 children had to be placed in foster homes outside the region due to a lack of internal resources, and five children did not receive a placement—all of which were from Harris County—according to DFPS data.

In addition to weakening family relationships, relocating a child outside his or her county hinders the normalcy of a child's life, which is a top priority for foster care agencies, said Leshia Fisher, Child Protective Services regional director for DFPS.

"When children are not placed in their home areas, it impacts them in a multitude of ways—they are suffering losses in family connection, lost friendships, losses in educational outcomes, and most importantly, the negative impact it has on their overall emotional stability," she said.

Officials said a surplus of foster-to-adopt families—or people whose motivation is to adopt and not foster short term—and a narrowness of foster preferences, such as which age groups, genders and ethnicities a family will accept, exacerbate the statewide crisis.

When children cannot be placed in foster homes

within their own counties, they are placed in homes within that child's respective region—if available—or anywhere in the state. If a home cannot be located, a child can be placed in a shelter for up to 30 days or in a residential care center, depending on the child's behavior.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Aside from fostering, officials listed other ways residents in Harris and Fort Bend counties can help: preparing meals for foster families, donating clothing and personal items for children, getting approved as a babysitter for foster children and volunteering with related organizations.

Between the two counties, there were more than 1,300 private agency foster homes in March, according to DFPS. More than 1,800 of the 2,007 children in Harris and Fort Bend counties needing homes in March were placed in private homes.

"We simply need more foster parents to help support the children who are removed from the county," Fisher said. "Everyone has to realize this is a problem that affects all of us, and as such, we will need to have a community response."

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City of Katy begins design process to expand wastewater facility in 2018

Existing plant averages 60 percent capacity, officials said

BY ANNA DEMBOWSKI

The city of Katy is planning an estimated \$3 million expansion of its wastewater treatment facility with construction set to begin in 2018. While the city's existing facility is a few years from reaching capacity, city Engineer David Leyendecker said the city wants to stay ahead of growth.

"I would estimate that we have about three years [until the plant reaches capacity] with the growth the way it is now," he said.

The existing facility can handle up to 3.075 million gallons of wastewater daily but averages only about 60 percent of that capacity, officials said.

"We've got plenty of capacity," city Administrator Byron Hebert said.

Based on criteria from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the city must begin the design process for a plant expansion when the

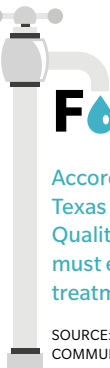
existing facility's three-month average flow reaches 75 percent capacity, Leyendecker said.

"The city of Katy has always tried to stay ahead of this [expansion] schedule to insure that problems don't arise," he said.

Design for the expansion is about 25 percent complete and is expected to be finished in two to three months, Leyendecker said. He added that the city could receive its permit for the expansion within 60 days from the TCEQ, pending any public comments.

"We'll be ready to bid the project probably in the first quarter of 2018, probably January or February," he said. "It will take probably eight to 10 months to build that phase of the plant."

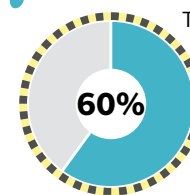
The plant expansion—which will allow the city to process 3.9 million gallons total of wastewater each day—comes at no additional cost to



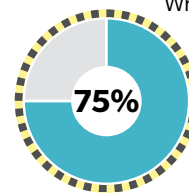
Following the flow

According to Katy city officials, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality outlines when a municipality must expand an existing wastewater treatment plant.

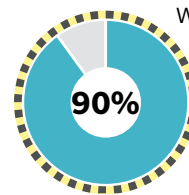
SOURCE: CITY OF KATY/
COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER



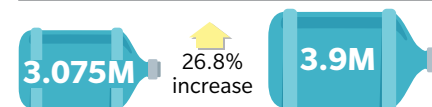
The city of Katy's wastewater plant receives about 60 percent of its permitted daily flow. The city has begun the design process for a plant expansion.



When a plant reaches 75 percent of its permitted flow for three consecutive months, likely to occur in two to three years, the municipality **begins the design process** to expand its wastewater plant.



When the plant reaches 90 percent capacity for three consecutive months, **design plans must be complete and financing must be available** for the plant expansion.



With an expansion, Katy's daily wastewater capacity will increase from 3.075 million gallons to 3.9 million gallons in late 2018.



Katy Fire Department plans to open a second station after Station 2 was relocated in 2016.

Katy Mills fire station to break ground

BY DANICA SMITHWICK

Katy Fire Department will soon break ground on a second station near Katy Mills.

After major flooding in April 2016, city officials chose to relocate Station 2 from the original planned site near Kingsland Boulevard and Pin Oak Road to Bell Patna Drive and Katy Mills Circle. Land for the new station was secured for roughly \$1 million, which came from both the city's

general fund and a bond referendum that passed in 2014.

"The original spot that had been picked out was just not going to work as far as the deployment of resources," Katy Fire Chief Russell Wilson said. "Based on [Insurance Services Office] recommendations, we had to be in a certain area to optimize response times."

Wilson said it was difficult to acquire land in such a quickly

developing area, but negotiations were made and infrastructure relocation is underway to accommodate the new station.

Although Station 2 is in the design phase, Wilson said the process of approving agenda items regarding the new facility is still ahead. Once the crews break ground, construction on the facility should be completed about one year later, he said.

"If you don't get water on the seat of the fire within a few minutes, that room basically heats up to the combustible temperature, and then what happens is ... usually not survivable," Wilson said. "[A second station] will allow us to get more fire suppression personnel on the scene to keep that from happening in a quicker way."

Since taking on his position more than one year ago, Wilson said the department has updated its computer aided dispatch system and digitized outdated equipment for increased response time.

Newly elected Mayor Chuck Brawner was instrumental in updating apparatuses during his time on City Council, according to Wilson.

"I think there were some people

concerned that if citizens were south of the railroad tracks, they were in more danger because of slow responses or if a train happened to be on the tracks," he said. "That's completely false. In fact, we can respond within three to four minutes between [KFD], ESD 48 and Willowfork [Fire Department]."

Wilson said he has recently applied for multiple grants for the department. The federal Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response grant could bring in as many as 16 new firefighter positions for the new station. Securing this grant would save taxpayers millions of dollars, he said.

"Since I've been here in the last year, we have also roughly doubled our number of full-time paramedics," he said. "I implemented a policy where our preferred recruits are both certified firefighters and certified paramedics. If not, I have them agree to become a paramedic."

The fire department's ISO rating is a 2—with 1 being the best and 10 being the worst. To maintain that rating, officials must open a second station by 2023. ISO consultants evaluate water systems, dispatching systems and response times.

Katy Council Member Chuck Brawner elected as Katy's next mayor

Brawner prioritizing mobility, growth while James Mendez re-elected to City Council

KATY According to unofficial results, Chuck Brawner and James Mendez were elected to the positions of mayor and City Council Ward B, respectively, in the city of Katy on May 6.

Brawner, who formerly served as Katy's City Council member representing Ward A, received 60.6 percent of the vote, or 1,019 total votes, in the race for mayor.

Opponent Hill Adams finished with the second-most number of votes with 38.7 percent, or 651 total votes, while Steve Jurovic finished with just 0.7 percent, or 12 total votes.

Mendez, the incumbent, received 51 percent of the vote in his victory for the race for

Ward B, or a total of 478 votes. Meanwhile, opponent Kayse Kendall Johnson finished with 33.7 percent, or 316 votes, and Jessie Campbell finished with 15.3 percent, or 144 votes.

Results were canvassed as of May 15.

Brawner said his top priorities include improving mobility, implementing flood protection strategies and controlling growth.

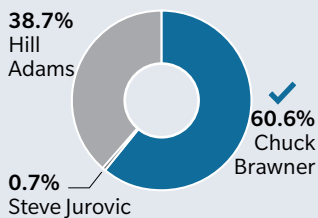
"I want to continue to have appropriate growth and not over-tax the city," he said. "We need to be able to control expansion. We have \$17 million worth of road projects either underway or on the books to be done."

Mendez said he decided to run for re-election because he wanted to finish what he started as a council member, including both short-term and long-term projects related to infrastructure improvements.

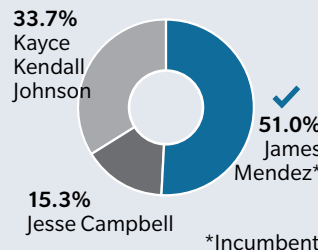
"Most of my fondest childhood memories are here in Katy. I love this city," he said. "I have the honor of four years as the people's representative in local government and have been listening to and fixing their concerns."

Council members serve two-year terms. J. Gary Jones ran unopposed for Ward A. Council members Durran Dowdle and Steve Pierson will be up for election in May 2018.

MAYORAL RACE



CITY COUNCIL WARD B



MEETINGS

Katy City Council: Meets the second and fourth Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. The next scheduled meetings are May 22 and June 12. City Council Chambers, 910 Avenue C, Katy 281-391-4800 • www.cityofkaty.com

Fort Bend County Commissioners Court: Meets the first, second, and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 1 p.m. Its next scheduled meetings are May 23, June 6 and June 13. 500 Jackson St., Richmond 281-341-8608 www.fortbendcountytx.gov

Harris County Commissioners Court: Meets at 10 a.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Its next meetings are May 23 and June 13. 1001 Preston Ave., Ste. 938, Houston 713-755-5113 www.harriscountytx.gov



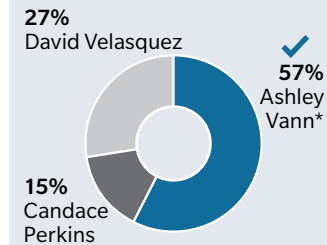
For instant coverage of these meetings, follow us on Twitter: @impactnews_kty

Vann, Doyal and Lacy win Katy ISD board races in May 6 election

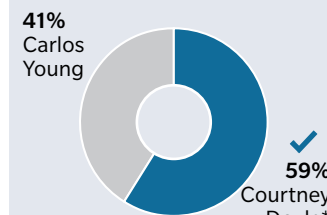
Two incumbents, one newcomer take seats as trustees sworn in to new roles May 15

KATY ISD Ballots have been counted and the unofficial winners of the three contested races for Katy ISD board of trustee positions were announced May 6. Results were based on the 24,046 votes cast in early voting and on election night, according to the district. Final results were canvassed as of May 15 with winners sworn in.

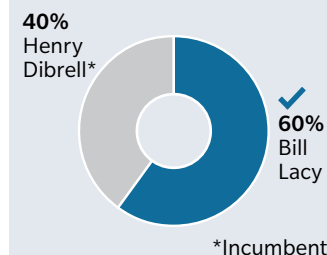
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POSITION 4



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Trustees approve future Katy ISD salary increases

KATY ISD The school board unanimously approved a salary increase April 24 of \$1,800 per employee for the 2017-18 school year. This amounts to a 3.16 percent average pay increase for teachers and a 3 percent average increase for non-teachers, according to the board.

"Three percent is nowhere near the amount [teachers] deserve, but we're grateful we're able to do more this year than we did last year," board President Rebecca Fox said.

The increases are planned for the

district's fiscal year 2017-18 budget, which has not yet been approved.

Last year the board approved a 1 percent increase for both teacher and non-teacher pay ranges for the 2016-17 school year, according to district documents. The starting pay for a Katy ISD teacher with a bachelor's degree is \$50,500 with the scale increasing up to \$73,330 based on experience.

In February, Fort Bend ISD raised the starting teacher salary to \$53,000 for the 2017-18 year from \$50,500.

New district bond advisory committee underway

KATY ISD The district held its first bond advisory committee meeting April 4 to begin the process of deciding what to include in the district's next bond package. The meeting is the first of approximately 12 planned for the 150-member committee.

The district is developing a new bond as a response to the rapid growth in the area, Katy ISD Superintendent Lance Hindt said in a video statement.

Meeting attendees were shown presentations by Hindt regarding the history of KISD bond referendums as well as given a crash-course on public school finance by Chief Financial Officer Chris Smith.

Michelle Hughes, president of TM Strategy & Design Group, will serve as facilitator for the committee.

"Without a process in place, a large group can encounter difficulty when there are so many conflicting viewpoints in a room," Hughes said. "My role is to help them converge on quality decisions."

Hughes also served as facilitator for the 2014 bond committee responsible for developing the controversial \$748 million bond package resulting in the construction of six new schools as well as the new Legacy Stadium. The bond was the largest amount passed in district history and solicited the largest voter turnout of the nine bond elections, according to district documents.

KISD previously held four education summits in March to collect community feedback for the district's next strategic design plan.



The Katy ISD board of trustees and superintendent stand with Patsy Stanley (front center).

Stan C. Stanley Elementary School renamed April 24

KATY ISD Trustees unanimously voted at the April 24 board meeting to approve renaming Stan C. Stanley Elementary School to Stan C. and Patsy Stanley Elementary School.

Patsy Stanley, a 34-year educator, is involved in several area organizations including the Katy Area Retired Educators. She also volunteers often at Stanley elementary.

Her husband, Stan Stanley, the elementary school's first namesake, died last year. After the vote, trustees spoke about Patsy Stanley, including board President Rebecca Fox.

"When Stan passed we all said, 'Why isn't Patsy's name on the school?'" Fox said. "I'm glad we got to correct that here tonight."

Supporters from Stanley elementary were also in attendance at the meeting and voiced their support for the change.

"You are always available for us," Fox said. "You have the energy of the Energizer bunny, and you're always saying yes to events."

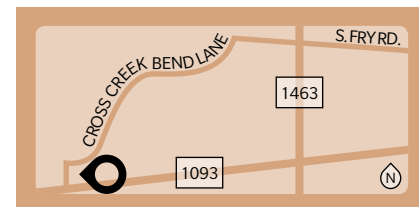
Stanley elementary opened in August 2009.

Construction approved for KISD's 41st elementary

KATY ISD Board members approved a proposal by unanimous vote for the construction of a new elementary school at their April 24 meeting.

The school will be the 41st elementary school in Katy ISD, according to district documents. The board will purchase a 13-acre property from NASH FM 529 LLC with a total acquisition cost not to exceed \$1,557,270.

The original design allocation of \$850,000 for the school was passed as part of the 2014 district bond.



MEETINGS

Katy ISD

Meets the third and fourth Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. The next meetings are May 22 and June 19.

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UPDATES FROM YOUR LOCAL LEGISLATORS

Here is an overview of activity from your area elected officials on various legislation so far this session.

**REP. CECIL BELL JR.**

R-Magnolia • Elected: 2014
cecil.bell@house.texas.gov

Bell joined 130 fellow representatives in approving the House draft of the budget. The budget draft will continue on in a conference committee between the Senate and House for further negotiations.

**SEN. JOAN HUFFMAN**

R-Houston • Elected: 2008
joan.huffman@senate.state.tx.us

Huffman was appointed to sit on the Senate and House budget conference committee, a role she held in the 2015 session, and will work to reconcile the multi-million dollar difference between the two budget drafts.

**SEN. LOIS KOLKHORST**

R-Brenham • Elected 2014
lois.kolkhorst@senate.state.tx.us

Kolkhorst's Senate Bill 6, which regulates bathroom use based on gender of a person at birth, has been in the House for more than a month without a committee assignment. Lawmakers are wondering when it will be.

**REP. MIKE SCHOFIELD**

R-Katy • Elected: 2014
mike.schofield@house.texas.gov

Schofield voted for an amendment on HB 39, which seeks to solve problems within Texas' CPS system, that would prohibit vaccines for children in CPS temporary custody. The amendment was approved in a close vote.

**REP. JOHN ZERWAS**

R-Richmond • Elected: 2007
info@johnzerwas.com

Zerwas, the chair of the House Appropriations Committee, was named to the House and Senate budget conference committee. He will co-lead the group in negotiating changes for one final budget.

FOLLOW LIVE COVERAGE ONLINE

Keep up with ongoing activity at the Texas Capitol by following Texas Legislature reporter Emily Donaldson via Twitter—**@EmilyJDonaldson**—or search **#CITxLege** for live legislative coverage throughout the session.

Get live coverage via our "Latest from the Lege" blog at **communityimpact.com/capitol**.

3 things to know about the Senate and House budget proposals

1 The House budget would allocate \$42.1 billion on public schools and advocate for \$1.5 billion more for public education through school finance reform. The Senate's proposal also allocates \$42 billion to public schools but would cut the state's overall portion by \$1.8 billion.

2 The House reduces the current amount allocated to border security—\$800 million—to a proposed \$653.1 million. The Senate matches the current expenditure with another budget line of \$800 million.

3 The House will take money from the state's Economic Stabilization Fund or Rainy Day Fund to shore up the budget. The House's proposal would take \$2.5 billion from the RDF. The Senate's budget draft does not touch the it, which has more than \$10 billion currently.

QUOTE OF NOTE

"I'M HOPEFUL WE CAN AGREE TO A BUDGET ON HOW WE FUND IT BY THE END OF MAY. OTHERWISE WE'LL BE IN A SPECIAL SESSION."

—LT. GOV DAN PATRICK ON THE BUDGET PROCESS

NUMBER TO KNOW

44 Gov. Greg Abbott used 44 vetoes in the 2015 session. Abbott can veto a bill up to 10 days after it reaches his desk or within 20 days after the end of the session. He can start using this power in May, as legislation gets passed by both chambers.

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NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE CAPITOL



Community Impact Newspaper and The Texas Tribune have established a partnership to share essential updates during the 85th legislative session. The Texas Tribune is the only member-supported, digitally focused, nonpartisan news organization that informs and engages with Texans about public policy, politics, government and statewide issues.

Compiled by Ayan Mittra

Budget update

- The Texas House endorsed its version of the state budget April 7. The House vote included using \$2.5 billion from the state's savings account, commonly known as the Rainy Day Fund. On March 28, the state Senate approved its own budget plan. Representatives from both chambers are meeting to work out the differences in the plans.

Public education

- On May 3, the House approved a major overhaul of a rating system that would give schools and districts grades between A and F. Also on May 3, the House approved a bill that would pare back the number of required standardized tests. On April 19, the House passed House Bill 21, its leading school finance bill, which would inject an extra \$1.6 billion into the state public education system. The Senate Education Committee on April 18 discussed a bill that would radically simplify the state's school finance formula.

"Sanctuary" jurisdictions

- The Texas Senate on May 3 voted to send to Gov. Greg Abbott a bill that would ban "sanctuary" jurisdictions in Texas and allow police to inquire about the immigration status of people they lawfully detain.

Cyberbullying

- The state Senate on May 3 unanimously approved a bill dubbed "David's Law" that's aimed at curbing teen suicides by cracking down on cyberbullying.

Ride-hailing services

- The Texas House on April 19 backed a proposal that would override local regulations concerning ride-hailing companies like Uber and Lyft.

The "bathroom bill"

- A Texas House committee heard testimony April 20 on a bill that would ban municipalities and school districts from enacting or enforcing trans-inclusive bathroom policies. On March 15, the Texas Senate approved Senate Bill 6, which would require people to use the bathroom in public schools, government buildings and public universities that matches their "biological sex." The legislation would also reverse local nondiscrimination ordinances.

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State voter ID changes come amid federal rulings

Appeals judge: Texas intentionally discriminated in 2011 legislation

BY EMILY DONALDSON

In the middle of the House Elections Committee's regularly scheduled hearing April 10, a federal judge handed down an especially pertinent decision declaring that Texas' 2011 voter identification legislation was passed with a discriminatory intent.

In 2016, the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the law had a discriminatory effect on minority voters. The court declined to rule at the time on the law's intent, waiting until mid-April to do so.

As if the meeting were scheduled with this ruling in mind, the House Elections Committee reviewed an updated voter ID law to address the 5th Circuit's rulings.

"We had this court ruling that literally happened here while we are sitting here on the dais," Chairwoman Jodie Laubenberg, R-Parker, said.

The piece of House legislation presented was authored by Rep. Phil King, R-Weatherford, and mirrors the

legislation passed in the Senate by Sen. Joan Huffman, R-Houston, earlier in the session.

The proposed law requires voters to use photo identification in limited forms, including a driver's license, U.S. military ID card, U.S. citizenship certificate, handgun carry license or U.S. passport.

Should a voter not be able to obtain one of these ID forms, he or she could present other forms of ID with a signed affidavit stating a reasonable impediment. These forms include a government document showing the name and address of the voter, a copy of a current utility bill, a bank statement, a government check, a paycheck or a certified copy of a domestic birth certificate.

If a voter lies about his or her circumstance, that person could be charged with a third-degree felony, which carries a sentence of two to 10 years in prison. A prosecutor must prove that a voter intentionally lied about his or her impediment.

Can I see your ID?

The Texas Legislature is revising the state's voter ID law amid court rulings that deemed existing requirements unnecessarily hinder some voters. Here is an overview of proposed changes from the previous voter ID legislation being examined this session:



Offering mobile voter registration units



Allowing voters younger than age 70 to use identification expired up to two years



Allowing voters age 70 and older to use any acceptable form of expired identification



Allowing anyone to use expired identification of any timeframe if the voter also signs an affidavit claiming a reasonable impediment

SOURCE: TEXAS LEGISLATURE ONLINE/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

Rep. Celia Israel, D-Austin, said she did not understand the reasoning for such a harsh penalty.

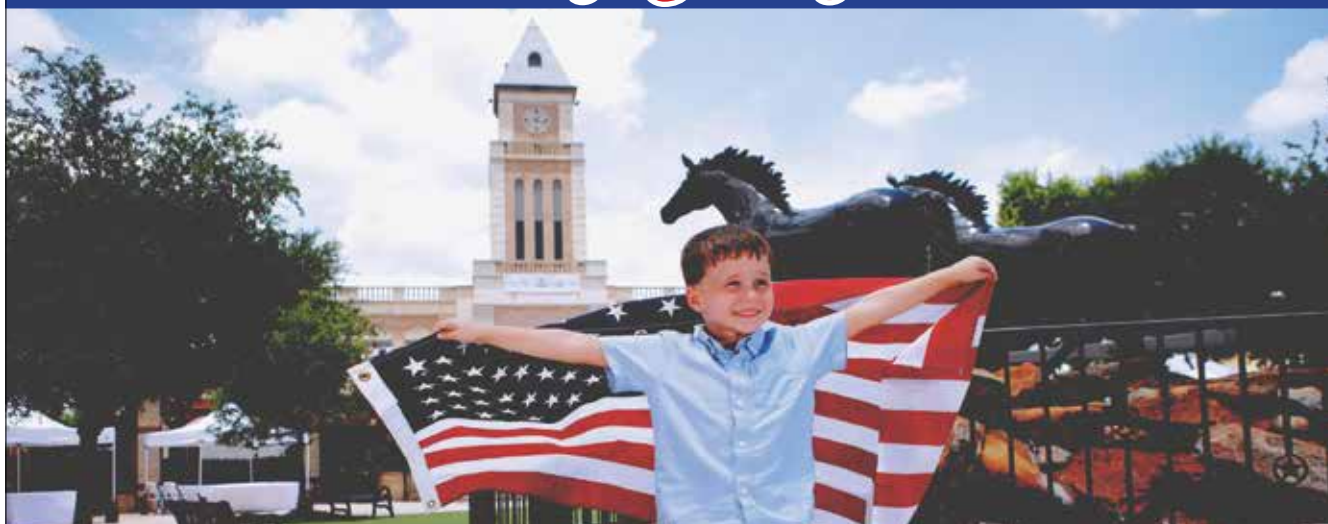
"The overwhelming reason if there is voter fraud is not because someone impersonated someone else," she said.

Brantley Starr, deputy first assistant attorney general, said proving intent would be the most challenging part of the proposed law.

In response to the April court ruling, Starr said the Texas Attorney General's office has yet to appeal the ruling.

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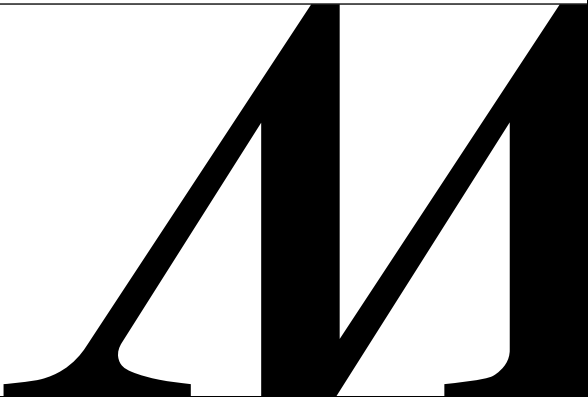
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1: Lawrence Wong (left) and Burton Wolfe run World Theater in Katy. 2: World Theater produced a performance in September of "West Side Story." 3: The theater brought "Sister Act" in March to the Katy area.

World Theater

Venue fosters cultural unity through musical theater productions

BY IMANI MCGARRELL

When Burton Wolfe was 10, he made a request to the principal of his elementary school. He wanted to rent out the school's auditorium for a performance.

"Ever since then I've been in love with theater and putting on shows," Wolfe said.

He now translates that love into his work as executive and artistic director of World Theater. The facility, located at 1012 S. Mason Road, has been open for 14 months. Services offered include a performing arts academy with dance classes, as well as summer camp and rental space for events.

Wolfe runs the business with Lawrence Wong, director of operations. The pair have been working together for more than 15 years. Before working in theater, Wong held leadership positions at several hotel chains, including Sheraton Hotels and J.W. Marriott.

Several years prior to his work at

World Theater, Wolfe served as the national director of productions and events for the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

Wolfe and Wong originally became friends while living in New York City.

In addition to in-house performances, Wolfe said he and Wong have worked to bring culturally diverse performances—the theater's specialty—to the Katy community. Last year, the company organized a performance by the Shenzhen Lily Choir at Alief High School. Shenzhen, China, is a sister city to Houston.

"After that performance the superintendent said to me, 'This is remarkable because these high school kids will know that they can relate to people their age from another country,'" Wolfe said.

World Theater has put on 11 shows since opening. The first show at the theater was a "Katy's Got Talent" talent show to gauge the talent in the

community, Wong said. The company partnered with the Katy Area Chamber of Commerce for the event and offered a roundtrip flight on Singapore Airlines as the top prize.

The main auditorium seats around 300 people, and the space is also rented out by a local church. Other shows put on by the theater include "Sister Act," "Miss Saigon," "My Fair Lady" and "West Side Story."

Wolfe, who is a speech and theater professor at Houston Community College, has written original productions from a variety of cultural themes. He also writes bilingual musicals in Mandarin, Vietnamese and Japanese. Focusing on different cultures is important because it shows human beings' similarities, Wolfe said.

"We're all brothers and sisters," Wolfe said. "If we can understand each other's culture, we can understand each other as people."

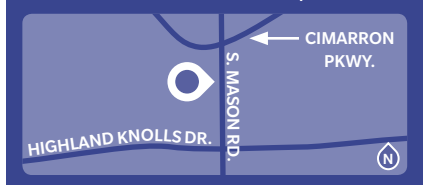
UPCOMING EVENTS AND PERFORMANCES

World Theater is home to a variety of fine arts productions in Katy. Here are a few upcoming community events:

- **Broadway musical summer camp (Disney's "Beauty and the Beast"):** June 12-23
- **Musical theater camp:** June 26- July 7
- **Creative mind development summer camp:** June 5-16, July 3-14
- **Get ready talent contest camp:** July 17-21, July 24- 28, July 31- Aug. 4
- **International themed musical theater summer camp:**
 - "The Sorcerer's Apprentice:" June 19-30
 - "The Fire Dragon:" July 10- July 21

World Theater

1012 S. Mason Road, Katy
832-552-5115
www.worldtheater.us
Hours: Mon.-Fri. 11 a.m. -10 p.m.



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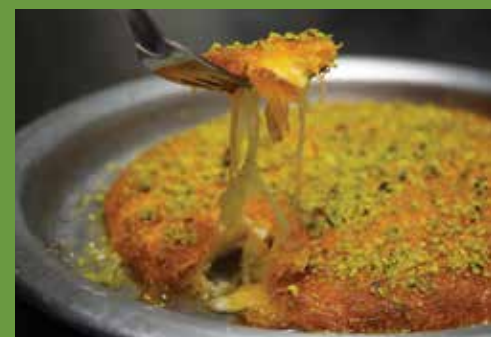
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DINING FEATURE



WHAT IS KUNAFa?

Kunafa is a flavored dessert made with specialty cheese, topped with buttery shredded dough, sprinkled with cracked pistachios and sweetened with syrup.

1: Gyros are made with a beef and lamb mix, tzatziki, tomatoes, lettuce and onions and served with fries (\$6.99). **2:** Mike Agel owns and operates Kunafa+ Cafe and Grill.

1

PHOTOS BY ROSEMARY SMITH/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER



2

Kunafa+ Cafe & Grill

Local restaurant brings authentic Mediterranean eats to Katy

BY ROSEMARY SMITH

Katy residents have a taste of the Mediterranean at the tips of their fingers.

Kunafa+ Cafe & Grill opened its doors March 2016 and has been enticing patrons ever since with its authentic cuisine, which consists of homemade wraps, flatbreads, grilled lamb, homemade sauces and kunafa dessert.

Palestine native and owner Mike Agel left information technology management for his culinary passion about two years ago. The self-taught chef said one customer literally jumped up and down inside the restaurant when she got her first taste of kunafa—the cafe’s namesake—which is a sweet but light dessert that features homemade cheese.

“The lady that jumped up and down is now a regular customer, and she orders kunafa every week,” Agel said.

“It gives me a sense of accomplishment and makes me very happy to see people’s reactions when they first try my food.”

Besides kunafa, the cafe’s most popular menu items include the mixed grill, which features lamb, chicken and beef skewers seasoned with a unique blend of Mediterranean spices that took years to create. Other popular eats include gyros filled with tender beef and a tzatziki sauce. Falafel served in a pita bread pocket is also a customer favorite.

“Everything we have is made from scratch—even the sauces like garlic and hot sauce—and that makes the food stand out too,” he said. “We’ve had people tell us we should package and sell our sauces but I don’t have time, so we tell people they can enjoy it at our restaurant.”

Besides tabbouleh, Greek salads,

hummus and tzatziki, appetizers range from grape leaves to kibbe. The grape leaves are stuffed with cracked wheat and vegetables, then simmered with olive oil and lemon juice for three to four hours.

Kibbe is made from a combination of cracked wheat, ground beef, pine nuts, onions and spices deep-fried together for a unique blend of flavors.

Agel said one of his favorite menu items is the lentil soup made with his family’s original recipe.

“I got the recipe from my grandmother, but it has been passed down through generations,” he said.

Besides spending time with his wife and children, Agel said sharing the food he grew up with in Palestine makes him happy.

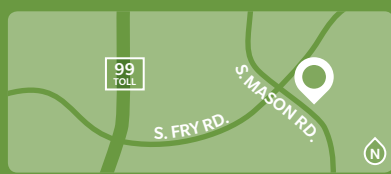
“Food is one of the joys of life, so when you give that to people, it’s a joyful thing,” Agel said.

Kunafa+ Cafe & Grill

5205 S. Mason Road, Katy
832-321-5947

www.kunafaplus.com

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OMG! Burger

Restaurant brings first halal burgers to Katy

Annie Khan said she is trying to change people's perceptions about burgers with her organic halal restaurant OMG! Burger. Khan opened the restaurant in December with her sister, brother-in-law and husband. Although this is her first location in Katy, Khan said she is not a stranger to the restaurant business. She previously owned a burger restaurant in Dallas. After selling it to a new owner so she could move closer to family in Houston, she knew she wanted to try again.

"This time we wanted to make everything more healthy and fresh with a better quality of ingredients," Khan said.

In fact, nothing is frozen and everything is made to order at her restaurant, Khan said. The patties are formed fresh every day, and the french fries are cut daily. The guacamole and pico de gallo are made in-house as well.

Although halal food is largely an ethnic custom, Khan said more and more Americans are turning to the practice as a healthier alternative.

"It's not just Indian or Muslim communities anymore," Khan said. "People are starting to realize this can be an option for everyone that wants to eat healthy. There are so many halal

burgers in the south side [of Houston], but we wanted something more accessible for our local community."

Halal is a form of slaughter that mandates an animal must be alive and healthy before death, and the animal's blood be drained from its body after it is killed. Halal meat includes beef, lamb, and poultry, according to BBC.

"We specifically make halal burgers because most of our Muslim community cannot go and have McDonald's or any other fast-food joints," Khan said.

Other types of halal food can range from pizza to Chinese food to gyros. In addition to halal meat, the restaurant also offers grass-fed beef and organic vegetables. Everything on the menu is free of hormones and antibiotics, Khan said.

OMG! Burger offers a daily happy hour as well as several gluten-free and vegetarian options. Delivery is available through mainstream websites, such as GrubHub and Uber Eats.

Khan and her sister work together in the restaurant every day as well as her brother-in-law, who works frequent shifts. She also manages the store with her husband.

"This time it's a family-run operation," Khan said. "It's something that my sister and I wanted to do together."



Annie Khan (left) and her sister Nina (right) work together in their restaurant OMG Burger.

Three dishes to try



OMG! stack burger (\$8.99)

The OMG! stack burger comes with two beef patties topped with melted American cheese, OMG! sauce, and organic lettuce, onions, pickles and tomatoes.

OMG! fries (\$6.99)

An order of OMG! fries contains a stack of fresh-cut french fries covered in shredded cheddar cheese, OMG! sauce, Sriracha sauce, cabbage, kimchi and green onion. The fries are topped with finely diced cilantro and a fried egg.

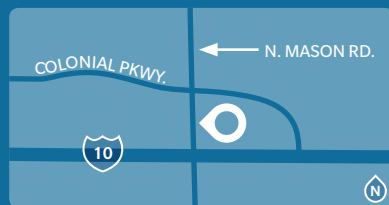


Spicy jalapeno burger (\$6.99)

The spicy jalapeno burger features a beef patty topped with pepper jack cheese, sauteed onions, bell peppers, jalapenos and lettuce, all topped with a spicy green sauce.

OMG! Burger

1230 N. Mason Road, Ste. 800, Katy
281-717-4545
www.txomgburger.com
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Fort Bend County Animal Services

Shelter lowers euthanasia rate, plans expansion

The cities of Katy, Sugar Land, and Rosenberg have their own animal shelters, but for the nearly 775 square miles of unincorporated Fort Bend County, animals are sent to a separate facility. Fort Bend County Animal Services, located at 1210 Blume Road, Rosenberg, has seen its animal intake and euthanasia rates drop as adoption and rescue rates have increased the past three fiscal years, according to shelter data.

The facility's biggest need is space, but Director Rene Vasquez said greater outreach and social media efforts have helped get more animals adopted.

"That's what we've been doing for the past few years, and I mean it has really been working well; it's just the dogs—the animals don't stop coming in," he said.

Strays are the most common arrivals at the shelter, Vasquez said. The shelter primarily takes cats and dogs plus some exotic animals, such as snakes and iguanas, Community Involvement Coordinator Barbara Vass said.

The shelter's euthanasia rate dropped by about 63 percent between fiscal year 2013-14 and FY 2015-16, and the adoption rate more than doubled in that time. Rescue numbers also grew by about 32 percent from FY 2013-14 to FY 2015-16, but the rate of redemptions—lost animals who are reclaimed by their original owners—fell by nearly 27 percent.

"People don't think of us to come and look for their dog," Vass said.

Vasquez said the shelter started holding animals longer to reduce the

euthanasia rate.

"We continue keeping [them] here, but we promote. And we do [adoption] specials," he said. "You name the special, it's on."

Emergency situations, such as the three confirmed distemper cases that were discovered at the shelter in April, require any help available. On April 26, the shelter put out a plea on social media to relocate 80 dogs while the facility could be sanitized. As a result, 10 people volunteered to foster animals, Vass said.

The facility's resources have undergone some changes in 2017, and more are expected. The shelter also gained a full-time veterinarian in February and a full-time veterinary technician in January, Vass said.

The county also plans to expand the facility with a new 5,976-square-foot building with 35 new kennels.

The project's request for proposal also includes program spaces such as a vet office and surgical suite, an intake area, a cat area with a quarantine room, food preparation and storage space, and a birthing room, among other needs, according to the county's Purchasing Agent website.

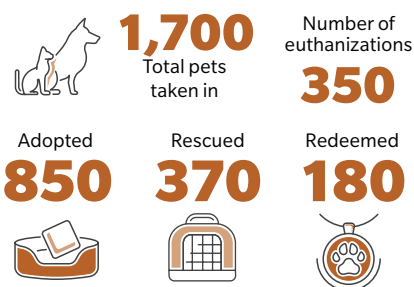
The county estimates it would cost about \$900,000 to construct the new building, which will be located on the south side of the existing shelter's parking lot. Vasquez said he expects it would be complete in spring or summer 2018.

"It's in the works," Vasquez said. "It's going to happen. It just takes time."



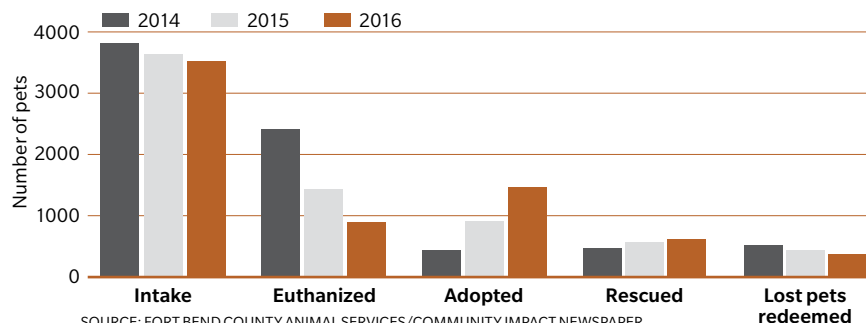
1: Rene Vasquez, Fort Bend County Animal Services director (left) and Community Involvement Coordinator Barbara Vass are seen with Bodie.

2017 BY THE NUMBERS YTD



OVER THE YEARS

Fort Bend County Animal Services has seen its intake and euthanasia rates drop over the past three fiscal years, and the numbers of adopted and rescued animals have risen in that time, according to staff.

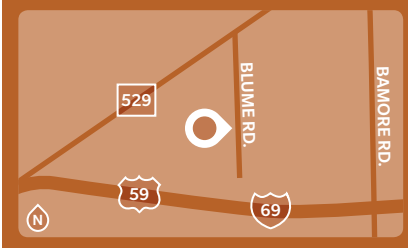


Fort Bend County Animal Services

1210 Blume Road, Rosenberg
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www.fortbendcountytx.gov/index.aspx?page=422

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Patsy's Pet Market



Camp Bow Wow

COMPILED BY **IMANI MCGARRELL** DESIGNED BY **ANYA GALLANT**

There are plenty of ways to care for a four-legged friend in Katy. From pet-friendly restaurants to veterinary services, *Community Impact Newspaper* has compiled a list of local places to ensure pets are healthy and happy. This list is not comprehensive.

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www.apah24.com

Brixton Pet Health

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832-913-3800
www.brixtonpet.com

Highland Knolls Veterinary Hospital

Katy Area Veterinary Medical Group
20920 Highland Knolls Drive, Katy
281-398-1551
www.katyvet.com

Old Town Animal Hospital

1750 Avenue D, Katy
281-392-8387
www.oldtownanimal.com

Pet Medical Center of Katy

6455 S. Fry Road, Ste. 105, Katy
281-392-7544
www.petmedicalkaty.com

Spring Green Pet Clinic

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www.katyvet.com

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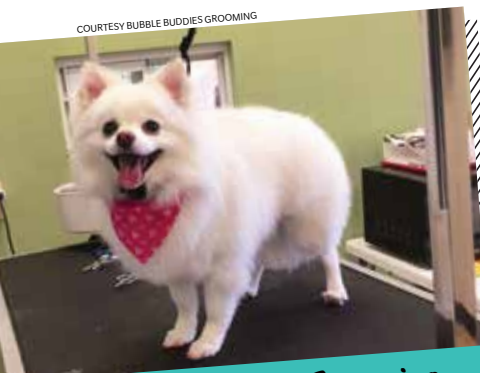
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Bubble Buddies Grooming



Microchipping 101

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Veterinarians and clinics scan for a microchip when lost pets are brought in. If a chip is registered with owner contact information, he or she will be contacted by the clinic or shelter.

52%

of microchipped dogs are returned to their owners



38%

of microchipped cats are returned to their owners



Microchip databases are online and can be updated with any changes in address or contact information.



Microchips are permanent and have an average lifespan of over **25 years**.

The average cost of installation is

\$45



Concerns

While microchipping is considered safe, the AVMA reported cases of cats and dogs developing tumors at the site of injection. It may also be ineffective if it migrates inside the body.

SOURCE: AMERICAN VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER



Resources for lost pets

The city of Katy animal control department only has jurisdiction inside the city limits. The city's animal control department updates its website daily with incident reports and photos of animals in the shelter. Outside the city limits, animal control is overseen by the animal control departments in Waller, Harris, and Fort Bend counties. Pet owners can contact animal control directly to ask about lost or found pets.

- **City of Katy Animal Control**
25839 I-10, Katy
281-391-4740
www.katyanimalcontrol.com
- **Fort Bend County Animal Services**
1210 Blume Road, Rosenberg
281-342-1512
www.fortbendcountytx.gov/index.aspx?page=422
- **Harris County Animal Control**
612 Canino Road, Houston
281-999-3191
www.publichealth.harriscountytx.gov/about/organization/vph
- **Waller County Animal Control**
979-826-8282
www.wallercountytexassheriff.org/animal-control

Resources for owners of lost pets in Katy include Special Pals and Citizens for Animal Protection.

- **Citizens for Animal Protection**
17555 I-10, Houston
281-497-0591
www.cap4pets.org
- **Special Pals**
3830 Greenhouse Road, Houston
281-579-7387
www.specialpalsshelter.org



Social media groups are also another great way for Katy pet owners to locate four-legged friends. Facebook groups and pages for local lost pets include:

- **Cinco Ranch Area Lost & Found Pet Network**
www.facebook.com/groups/CRLostPets
- **Katy Lost Pets**
www.facebook.com/KatyLostPets
- **Katy, Texas Lost and Found Pets**
www.facebook.com/KatyTexasLostAndFoundPets
- **Lost & Found Pets of Katy, TX**
www.facebook.com/Lost-Found-Pets-of-Katy-TX-1442352735805265

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| 2. 27510 Windcrest Key Ln. | \$439,000 |
| 3. 26103 Allenford Ct. | \$379,900 |

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EDUCATION

Local senator's bills target county departments of education

CY-FAIR Sen. Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston, filed three bills this session that could affect the Harris County Department of Education. The most extreme, Senate Bill 1167, proposes abolishing county departments of education in counties with a population of at least 3.3 million.

SB 1166 calls for the review of county departments of education in counties with a population of 4 million or more. The bill, co-authored by Sylvia R. Garcia, D-Houston, calls on the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission, the state

commission that analyzes the performance of and need for certain agencies, to determine if a specific county department of education is no longer needed.

HCDE serves 25 school districts, including Cy-Fair ISD, offering services from early childhood through adult education.

Locally, Bettencourt said the Region 4 Education Service Center—which serves Cy-Fair ISD and 18 other districts across Harris County in addition to 30 others in Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend,

Galveston, Liberty and Waller counties—already serves the same purpose as HCDE.

“There’s duplication with Region 4 already,” he said. “Let’s do a complete full sunset review and find out what duplication exists.”

Region 4 services include professional development, behavior support, special education, transportation and information technology solutions, among others.

However, officials with CFISD said the department serves an important purpose.

By offering shared service

BETTENCOURT'S

BILLS

Sen. Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston, has filed bills in the state Legislature that would affect the Harris County Department of Education.

SOURCE: TEXAS LEGISLATURE/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

SB 646

would **eliminate** the taxing authority of county boards of education in counties with a population of at least 3.3 million.

SB 1166

calls for the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission **review** of county departments of education in counties of 4 million people or more.

SB 1167

would **abolish** county departments of education in counties of 3.3 million people or more by Sept. 1, 2017.

arrangements, HCDE provides districts with a dollar's worth of services while only spending 20 cents, according to Nicole Ray, assistant

superintendent of communication and community relations at CFISD.

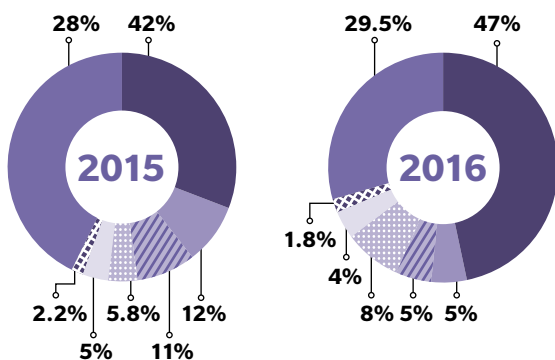
FULL STORY BY
DANICA SMITHWICK

PRIMARY DRUGS OF USE REPORTED BY FORT BEND REGIONAL COUNCIL ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE CLIENTS

Numbers may not equal 100 percent due to the category of multiple substances used.

■ Marijuana ■ Alcohol ■ Cocaine
■ Multiple primary substances
■ Other ■ Methamphetamine ■ Opioids*

*OPIOIDS WERE REPRESENTED IN CLIENTS USING MULTIPLE SUBSTANCES.



SOURCE: FORT BEND REGIONAL COUNCIL ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

NONPROFIT

Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse reaches out

FORT BEND For more than 40 years, the Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse has provided counseling and outpatient programs to county residents who experience substance abuse.

In addition to its regular programs, the council leads the Fort Bend Community Prevention Coalition with members of the business, law enforcement, faith, health and civic communities. The coalition held its annual drug symposium April 20 at the Missouri City Community Center.

“Whereas we work directly

with kids, the coalition works at a community level developing laws and policies,” Prevention Program Director Bob Conlon said.

The nonprofit began in Rosenberg in 1976 with adult-only programs, according to Laura Jenkins, director of program compliance. She said the council’s adult program has grown from about 150 people in its first year to almost 543 people in 2016.

The council has staff at Access Health in Richmond and at the Texana Center in Rosenberg as well. In the 1980s the council expanded to include youth programs that are now held in 40 schools in Fort Bend ISD, Lamar CISD and Stafford MSD.

“The need was recognized because, I’m sure many of the people—this is my guess—many

of the people who came in had children, and the schools asked for our help,” Jenkins said.

In total, the council reaches about 45,000 students per year through its youth programs, Conlon said. The nonprofit also holds three summer camps.

Frank Perkins, a youth prevention counselor, works with middle and high school students and said when the 12-week program starts, teens are typically hard to reach.

“Because the information we talk about gets personal, and so you’re the stranger, in so many words,” Perkins said, adding some learn to open up. “I’ve seen kids who were very skeptical at the very beginning then become very large butterflies [by] the end and don’t want you to go.”

FULL STORY BY **AMELIA BRUST**

HEALTH CARE DIRECTORY 2017–18



Find the latest news, trends and local health care listings in the June edition.



with the Fort Bend County fire marshal's office, said projects submitted to his office are typically reviewed and approved or denied within 10 days.

"If a code compliance issue is discovered during the review, a phone call is made to the contact person for the project and they are advised of the issue," he said. "If no response is made to correct the issue[s], then the design documents are denied permit and a rejection letter is provided to the submitting company."

Matheson said he has not heard any complaints from local businesses regarding the timeliness of the construction plan approval process, and his team is available to discuss projects and issues throughout the process.

Shawn Sturhan, assistant manager of the permit office for the Harris County Engineering Department, said his department works to ensure commercial development is not negatively affecting a neighborhood. These measures range from traffic flow and flood prevention outside the business to making sure fire extinguishers and emergency exits are properly marked inside.

"It's important because if you're opening a new business, the public is going to be entering there," he said. "Whether it's employees or customers, we check for building life safety so the people inside are going to be safe."

OBTAINING A PERMIT

Before opening a new business in Harris County, individuals must work with the Engineering Department to ensure the building is up to code, fire safety regulations are in place and health inspections, among others, are passed.

Once a business owner submits site and safety plans, he or she goes through a two-week review process

with the county. Officials then return the plans with notes on what needs to be done to meet all codes and receive final approval.

"We are pretty strict on our two-week reviews," Sturhan said. "Something that could take reviews long[er] is if [applicants] don't address comments or make a correction [but] it still doesn't meet code. We can't approve something that doesn't meet code."

Building and fire code staff receives about 20 submissions daily, some of which are entering the second or third round of review, Sturhan said. The department also permits about 200 lease spaces every month, so not all assignments are new buildings.

Harris County Fire Marshal Mike Montgomery said, for many businesses, the fire inspection is the final step before occupancy. However, anyone who offers food or beverages must also request a food permit from Harris County Public Health before opening.

The applicant must submit an application, plan, menu and fee to HCPH, said Deanna Copeland, manager of food and neighborhood nuisance abatement for HCPH. The HCPH must complete its review within four weeks of receiving the application. After the review, a request for a preopening inspection must be submitted 10 days before the desired inspection date. Applicants have one year to complete their portion of the process, she said.

Obtaining the food and beverage permit is not more difficult or time-consuming than obtaining other permits, but it creates additional opportunities for mistakes and delays in the process, several business owners said.

OPENING DELAYS HURT BOTTOM LINE

Pari Natarajan, owner of Koldprezz in Katy, said his organic and raw juice shop was set to open in December, but permitting delays pushed that date back to February.

UNLOCKING the building code

The permitting process in Harris County requires business owners to work through two important reviews before opening. Businesses handling food and beverages must also obtain health department approval.

1 Submit a civil site plan

The plan covers underground utilities, water, stormwater drainage, pavement, driveways, detention facilities and sanitation. Consultants are allowed to help for this step.

2 Submit a fire and life safety review

This covers fire code and emergency safety plans and ensures proper alarms and extinguishers are in place.

Both documents are reviewed for approval

A

During a two-week review process, engineers will comment on what must be done to meet all related codes.



B

Business owners make suggested corrections and resubmit the plan. This step has no time limit.



C

After another two-week review, if everything is up to code, the plan will be approved. If it is not approved, the plan is resubmitted.



D

When the plan is approved, engineers set up payments for permits. Payments may vary depending on the building site.



E

After all the other steps are completed, businesses handling food and beverages must obtain a food permit from Harris County Public Health.



SOURCE: HARRIS COUNTY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

"The juice promotes a health lifestyle, and [in the] new year, people want to get more into fitness centers, and they want to try something new," he said. "Asking someone to start something

new in the middle of February is a big lost marketing opportunity."

Many delays stemmed from a lack of communication between entities, including Harris County's permitting

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Advice from the EXPERTS



Many businesses make the same mistakes when going through the permitting and inspection process. However, resources are available among experienced business owners, chambers of commerce and community colleges to help guide business owners through the process of opening a new business in unincorporated Harris County.

Tips for success

- 1 Get to know the area where the business will be located.
- 2 Find a contractor who is familiar with the permitting requirements for the location and the type of business being opened.
- 3 Communicate with local chambers of commerce and other business organizations whose members have experience in the region.
- 4 Talk to other business owners in the area about their experiences.
- 5 Investigate community business programs such as those offered at Lone Star College System's Small Business Development Center.

Mistakes to avoid

- 1 Not applying for a permit or submitting an application with incomplete or incorrect information
- 2 Failure to complete the permit process before beginning construction
- 3 Not requesting a final inspection
- 4 Incomplete fire protection systems or lack of system plans
- 5 Making construction changes without approval

SOURCES: HARRIS COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE, MYESHI BRILEY/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

COMMON reasons for FIRE INSPECTION FAILURE

The Harris County Fire Marshal's Office identified reasons that businesses owners fail their annual fire inspection in the county.

- Locked or blocked exits
- Overcrowding
- Unpermitted renovations or expansions
- Improper storage and poor housekeeping
- Blocked fire lanes or fire lanes not marked

department, health department and the local water district, according to Natarajan.

This is unavoidable for anyone opening a new business. For local entrepreneurs, Natarajan said paying several entities on top of losing several months of business could be devastating to local entrepreneurs.

Natarajan said the officials who inspected the shop had no standard

for businesses like Koldprezz. Because the building is old and had existing plumbing lines, he thought the health department inspection would be easy.

Making and bottling fresh juices on-site requires minimal equipment, but Natarajan said officials asked about heating ranges, vent hoods, grease traps and other unnecessary equipment. This caused nearly two months of delay.

"Those things are not serving any

purpose," he said. "They told me, 'We don't know what will be the future use of this building.' But I'm paying rent for [the juice bar], I'm not paying rent for the future use of the building."

Other local business owners were unwilling to speak on the record but said Harris County did not file their permitting paperwork properly, which caused delays of up to six months. Poor communication was the top reason given for delays, according to sources.

Sturhan said business owners can submit reviews online, download copies of approved plans and pay for permits via credit card, he said.

"Our main goal here is public safety," Sturhan said. "We're not trying to stop development or make it hard to open a business. The sooner I can get you meeting code and open for business, the sooner you're out of my hair."

CITY OF KATY

Don Huff, owner of two Papa Murphy's locations in Katy, said his experience under the city of Katy's permitting department was a positive one.

"Even though the city at times took a little while to get some things through the system, the permitting for me was actually OK," he said. "I actually went back and wrote a nice letter to their boss."

Huff said when he opened his first Papa Murphy's location, he did the walk-throughs with permitting officials himself, but the second time around, he paid his architect to attend facility assessments.

When Huff ran into an issue or something that could potentially turn into a problem, he said the most effective way to deal with it was to visit the permitting office and meet with staff face-to-face.

"One thing that I found is if they say they're going to come by on a certain day, at least the owner needs to be there to let them in," Huff said. "The city inspectors would come out there,

"WE'RE NOT TRYING TO STOP DEVELOPMENT OR MAKE IT HARD TO OPEN A BUSINESS. THE SOONER I CAN GET YOU MEETING CODE AND OPEN FOR BUSINESS, THE SOONER YOU'RE OUT OF MY HAIR."

—SHAWN STURHAN, ASSISTANT MANAGER OF THE PERMIT OFFICE OF THE HARRIS COUNTY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT



"[INSPECTORS] HAVE A LOT OF THINGS GOING ON, A LOT OF BUILDINGS BEING BUILT OUT IN THAT AREA THEY HAVE TO COVER."

—DON HUFF, KATY FRANCHISE BUSINESS OWNER

and if you weren't out there, they'd leave a note and come back on a different day—maybe the following week."

Huff said he could understand how business owners could grow frustrated with the permitting process. Rescheduling a meeting could cause delays and cost more money, and many entrepreneurs take out loans to build out a new space, he said.

Some business owners see the process as a nuisance—especially when the city cannot accomplish everything as quickly as they would like, Huff said.

"The number of inspectors that work for the permitting department—there were not a whole bunch of them," Huff said. "They have a lot of things going on, a lot of buildings being built out in that area they have to cover."

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY **VANESSA HOLT**



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has constructed projects in the greater Katy area, including Katy ISD's newest schools.

Webber, based in The Woodlands, acquired PepperLawson in 2016.

Over the past five years, the number of construction workers increased 14 percent in the Houston/Fort Bend County metropolitan area, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data. Despite an increase in the number of workers, many construction sites are understaffed, namely with skilled laborers who must have specific certifications or licensing before they can perform work.

"We have been adding workers, but companies are saying they aren't the workers they ideally would like to have," said Ken Simonson, chief economist for the Associated General Contractors of America.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

The shortage is noticeable because of the vast amount of construction underway and in the pipeline. Steven Burch, president and chief operating officer of White Construction Co., said it comes down to supply and demand.

"Since people have choices and there's a lot of work, prices are going up—not because it costs a lot more [for materials but] in labor, it definitely does—because a lot of the subcontractors are competing for the same people, and the way they get them is they pay them more," he said.

As a result, Burch said many owners have to rethink a project's viability to stand up to delays and come up with a more realistic time frame and budget.

"When there's more demand than there is supply, [subcontractors] can raise the price and [they] can be ultraspecific about who [they] do business with," he said.

Granato said the construction labor force has been looking elsewhere for jobs.

"It seemed like our labor force that we use for construction over the last 20 years here started taking oil and gas jobs," he said.

After the recent oil and gas downturn, however, Granato said he noticed workers were coming back to construction but wanted to be paid more to align with the higher pay previously in oil and gas. He said it ends up increasing the cost of construction.

"Now, you've got labor [that] is really blowing the bottom out of the market," Granato said.

Bud Walters, a Katy resident, owner of Pieper Houston Electric and

CONSTRUCTION TRENDS

Engineering News-Record magazine is used by construction professionals to follow general construction pricing trends. The ENR gathers pricing information for 20 cities across the U.S. to determine an average price for a set amount of labor, materials and construction costs. The ENR does not use a dollar amount for pricing estimates but rather a cost index to offer a snapshot of general cost trends.



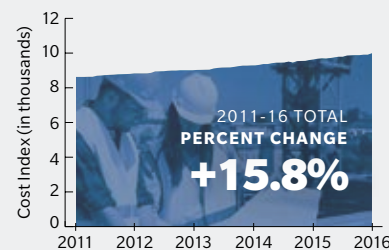
COMMON LABOR INDEX

Common labor costs—based on the Construction Cost Index—tracks union wages plus fringe benefits for laborers.



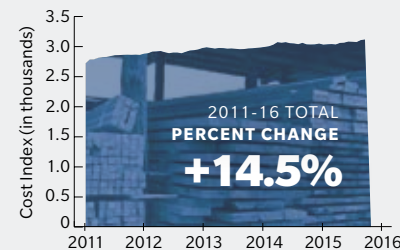
SKILLED LABOR INDEX

Skilled labor costs—based on the Building Cost Index—tracks union wages /benefits for carpenters, bricklayers and iron workers.



MATERIALS PRICE INDEX

The Materials Price Index tracks the price movement of structural steel, Portland cement and two-by-four inch lumber.



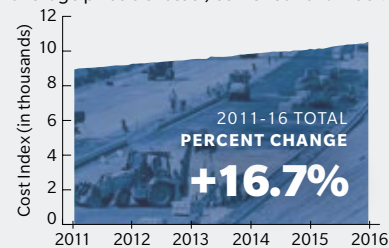
BUILDING COST INDEX

The Building Cost Index is used to estimate costs of a set amount of skilled labor and average prices of steel, cement and lumber.



CONSTRUCTION COST INDEX

The Construction Cost Index helps estimate costs of a set amount of common labor and average prices of steel, cement and lumber.



SOURCE: ENGINEERING NEWS-RECORD/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

president of American Subcontractors Association Houston Chapter, said part of the issue is there are fewer skilled laborers coming from high schools.

"All mamas want their babies to go on to college, but I've got a foreman electrician making north of \$100,000 a year," Walters said. "You don't normally hear that in high school. We've lost a great number of kids coming into the trades because they'd rather try to go through college, and some kids are set for college and some aren't."

Walters said instead of getting young adults at age 18, sending them through an apprenticeship program and into the career field, he gets potential workers when they are much older.

Immigration is another piece to the puzzle, said Stan Marek, CEO of Marek Brothers Systems Inc., a Houston-based residential and commercial construction company.

"People are using a lot of undocumented labor, and it really hurts the good guys that try to do it right," Marek said. "The way they do this [is] they don't hire them as employees, they hire them as independent subcontractors."

He said the issue will not be solved until Congress passes an immigration law that gives the workers a path to

legal status.

"If they're illegal, there's not many places they can go," Marek said. "The workers are being held hostage because of their status. They can't go to a legitimate employer. I can't hire those people."

What could exacerbate the shortage are President Donald Trump's immigration policies and the effect on Texas' economy and construction industry, Simonson said.

LABOR ISSUES

The construction industry not only struggles with finding skilled workers but also with retaining such workers, officials said.

According to an AGC survey of 131 firms in Texas, 32 percent of companies had a hard time finding salaried and skilled hourly positions, and 27 percent found difficulty in hiring skilled hourly positions.

About 51 percent of the firms said they would continue to have a hard time filling these roles, with 54 percent reporting they have had to increase base pay and 38 percent had to provide bonuses or incentives to workers. The biggest concern among these firms—with 49 percent agreeing—is worker shortages.

Bill Farnum, vice president of preconstruction services for White Construction, said seasoned construction workers are retiring from the industry.

"There's not as much interest in that profession," he said. "It's not the profession it was 20 years ago. People have many more choices for similar pay."

Chuck Gremillion, the executive director of Houston-based Construction Career Collaborative, which sets out to train workers and boost the industry, said the skilled labor shortage is overall extremely complex. In Houston, it dates back to about 1982 with the city's first oil recession.

Houston was overbuilt after the bust, Gremillion said. Construction companies looked to cut costs and moved away from unions, which cost more for labor but also trained employees. With a lack of training, the skilled workforce then retired, creating a labor deficit, he said.

Additionally, as the industry obtains bids by providing the lowest cost for a project, companies started employing workers as subcontractors who did not receive benefits.

"They were able to cut about 30-35 percent of their labor expense that way," Gremillion said. "It created a race to the bottom, obviously."

When more students began going to college, the industry looked to undocumented labor to get projects done, he said. Since wages have remained stagnant, what was once a way to earn a middle-class living is not the case anymore, he said.

"Since the industry wasn't training people, it was throwing unskilled labor at the problem, which, of course, was just adding to the problem," Gremillion said.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

Dead time is a concern for developers

and business owners alike. The increased time to find workers not only can set a project back by months—it also affects company bottom lines because they have to pay more to obtain workers.

“They run into unexpected overtime costs because they couldn’t find workers,” Simonson said. “Once [the contractor] tells the owner a firm bid, they’re stuck with those costs.”

Farnum said a developer or project owner pays for any downtime through taxes or rent payments.

“Just to get a site development permit used to take 90-120 days,” he said. “Now if you get one in six to nine months, you’re lucky.”

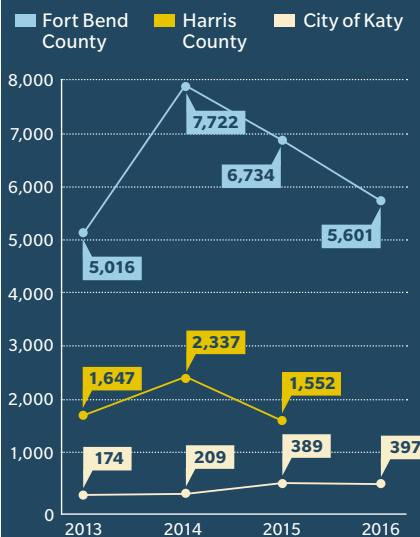
Besides increased labor costs, some companies are reporting having to pay more for the cost of construction materials, including steel, copper and aluminum, Simonson said.

“What we saw for several years—2010 to mid-2016—was that the cost of goods used in construction, materials that wind up in a project and items consumed by contractors, that those costs were declining on a year-over-year basis,” he said. “But starting last year, they saw an increase.”

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY **OLIVIA LUECKEMEYER**

COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED

The number of commercial and residential building permits issued across Katy, Fort Bend and Harris Counties has fluctuated since 2013.



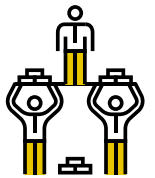
*HARRIS COUNTY DATA FOR KATY-AREA ZIP CODES; 2015 IS THE MOST RECENT DATA AVAILABLE.

SOURCES: CITY OF KATY, HARRIS COUNTY, FORT BEND COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

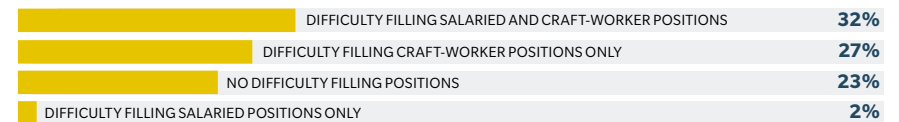
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The Associated General Contractors of America polls contractors each year on trends and concerns. In the latest survey completed in December, 131 Texas firms responded to the survey about what is affecting their firm the most, including a shortage of hourly skilled, or craft-worker, positions.

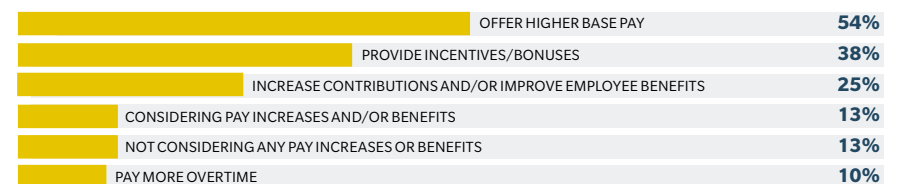
SOURCE: ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER



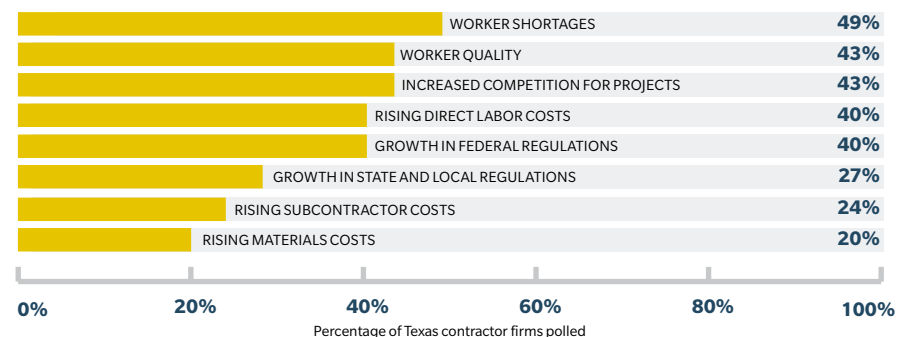
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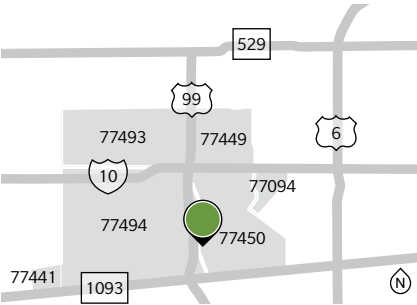


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Bordered by Grand Parkway to the west, Westheimer Parkway to the north and Little Prong Creek to the south, Cinco Ranch Cinco Forest has access to restaurants and shopping along Westheimer and is an approximate 2-mile drive from the La Centera at Cinco Ranch development.

Cinco Ranch Cinco Forest is in Katy ISD, and as part of the Cinco Residential Property Owners Association, residents also have access to swimming pools, tennis courts, parks and The Golf Club at Cinco Ranch.



Build-out year: 2005
Builders include: David Weekley Homes, Perry Homes, Village Homes
Number of homes in community: 419
Square footage: 2,728-5,351
Home values: \$398,800-\$640,000
HOA dues (estimated): \$1,040 annually
Amenities: swimming pools, tennis courts, volleyball courts, parks, trails, golf club, The Lake House Community Center
Schools: Williams Elementary School, Beck Junior High School, Cinco Ranch High School
Property taxes (in dollars):
Katy ISD 1.5166
Fort Bend County General 0.4580
Fort Bend Drainage 0.0160
Cinco MUD 2 0.3400
Fort Bend County ESD 2 0.0980
Willow Fork Drainage 0.1850
Total (per \$100 valuation) **2.6136**

Median home value
\$589,963

Homes on the market*
9

Homes under contract*
4

Median annual property taxes
\$11,911

Median price per square foot
\$139.00

Average days on the market*
77

*As of 5/16/17
Neighborhood data provided by Jamie McMartin, CNAS
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RECENT LISTINGS

4522 Summits Edge Lane
4 bedroom / 3.5 bath 4,300 sq. ft. \$650,000
Ashley Wexelberg
Real Broker, LLC 281-509-3948

22826 Rachels Manor Drive
4 bedroom / 3 bath 3,312 sq. ft. \$423,900
Rachel Clark
Keller Williams Premier Realty 512-775-4345

22818 Deforest Ridge Lane
4-5 bedroom / 4.5 bath 4,545 sq. ft. \$579,900
Jimmy Franklin
RE/MAX Grand 281-347-2200

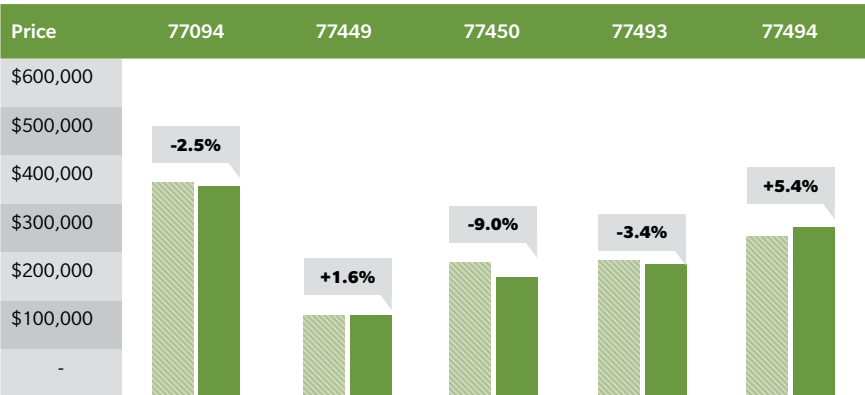
4311 Candlewood Park Lane
5 bedroom / 3.5 bath 4,204 sq. ft. \$624,999
Angela Kraushaar
Coldwell Banker United, Realtors 713-253-5678

MARKET DATA

ON THE MARKET (MAY 2017)

Number of homes for sale/average days on the market					
Price range	77094	77449	77450	77493	77494
\$149,999 or less	-	8/28	1/22	2/16	-
\$150,000-\$199,999	-	93/38	18/28	13/62	4/90
\$200,000-\$299,999	2/28	101/51	70/53	107/60	164/47
\$300,000-\$399,999	11/35	1/115	65/52	70/97	251/60
\$400,000-\$499,999	14/33	-	23/52	29/86	169/54
\$500,000-\$599,999	4/6	-	17/49	17/52	81/85
\$600,000-\$799,999	8/103	-	14/36	10/93	80/69
\$800,000-\$999,999	12/108	-	2/50	6/182	17/84
\$1 million +	3/154	-	8/100	7/94	23/115

AVERAGE PRICE OF HOMES SOLD IN APRIL 2016 VS. 2017



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DEALS THIS MONTH

AUTOMOTIVE

Auto Check Elite 51

RECREATION & FITNESS

Katy Youth Soccer Club 46

DINING

Agave Rio 50

Banh Mi 48

China Inn Cafe 49

Cowboy Chicken 44

Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers ... 46

Frios Gourmet Pops 43

Great Harvest Bread Company 46

koldprezz 47

La Michoacana 46

Pane E Vino Trattoria 48

Papa Murphy's 45

PDQ 49

Sur Latin Peruvian Cuisine 49

Texas Mesquite Grill 48

MEDICAL

Katy Ideal Weight Loss 48

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Joe the Plumber 44

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*If you prefer not to text us, you may receive an equivalent coupon by sending a SASE to Papa Murphy's Intl. - 8000 NE Parkway Dr. Ste. 350 - Vancouver, WA 98662 - Attn: Guest Services / Dinner Circle



Offer valid 4/24/17-5/28/17. Available only on New York-Style crust in the X-Large size. X-Large is served on a Family Size tray. No substitutions. Available at participating locations. Not valid with any other offers.

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Choose Your Large
Signature Pizza

Discount off regular menu
Signature Pizza

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FIRE IT UP

Turkey Chile Cheddar Melt

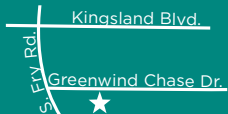
Thin slices of smoked turkey breast loaded with sharp cheddar cheese, fresh tomatoes, roasted green chiles, and a house-made green chile mayo. Grilled to a melted perfection, you'll savor every bite!

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