

# PROGRESS 2017: WHARTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP.

# Economic development overview

Special to the Journal-Spectator/Express

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When Wharton was settled in 1846, Wharton's growth and development responded to the needs created by the growth of farming in the region and later took advantage of the commerce and trade opportunities created with the development of the railroad.

Today, the city is thriving as the county seat, and its growth can be credited to the responsiveness and foresight of the city of Wharton under the management of Andres Garza Jr. and his staff, and it is also being sustained and advanced by Wharton Economic Development Corp.

The Wharton Economic Development Corporation's (WEDC) office, under new leadership, continues providing services such as: assisting with site selection analysis; offering data on key business facilities or sites; evaluating and applying for incentives; aiding in the permitting process and providing introductions to community stake holders.

The infrastructure of our city (though some improvements and protections internally remain necessary) is in a solid position to expand and foster new growth for industrial, commercial and residential prospects alike.

With a citywide comprehensive plan underway, I like Wharton's position to meet the challenges of growth in a manner consistent with our history of entrepreneurship, our diversity, and the charm of our city.

The planning has begun with a thorough inventory of our land use, building conditions, street and drainage assessment having been completed. The public input portion of the planning is forthcoming and will commence between November 2017 and wrapped up



This is the Wharton Economic Development Corp.'s new logo which will debut in August with the launch of a new website.

by October 2018.

WEDC is taking measures to build its digital marketing efforts. In early August, we will launch a new website which will feature rebranding the office with a new logo.

Our new economic development website will not only inform, but more importantly, show site selectors, business relocation experts and prospects the assets Wharton has to offer for economic development.

The website will be mobile friendly with newly-developed copy and keywords that help aid our Google Search rankings, an interactive proximity map showing Wharton's location at a national, regional and local level with transportation assets highlighted for highways, rail, air and ports.

In addition, the local view will offer clickable site views of our premier industrial sites with utilities outlined.

A property search tool is also included for indexing and searching available sites and buildings within the Wharton area.

The site will have a report builder function that will allow prospects the ability to build a PDF report as they browse the site.

As for our new branding message,

it's straightforward: Wharton is the "where with all!" We have who you need for workforce, the land you need, and we are where you want your business to be.

About 40 years ago, the Texas Department of Transportation bypassed the city of Wharton.

Today, Wharton's readiness to develop and grow alliances with big business in nearby Houston is positioning Wharton as a home for prospective business and industry.

Illustrating our advantage to these prospects is the chief undertaking for the Wharton Economic Development Corp.

Through our digital marketing and networking endeavors we are working to see our exposure to opportunity grow greater each and every day.

The growing Houston market has Wharton strategically situated to utilize our local assets for industrial and commercial expansions.

Greater Houston Partnership and Wharton County and are working toward a formal relationship facilitated through Wharton EDC and El Campo CDC respectively.

WEDC and Greater Houston Partnership continue working together.

Wharton County is a strong ally of the Greater Houston Partnership.

The Greater Houston Partnership and Wharton County, Wharton EDC and El Campo continue to work together jointly on marketing, site selection, and recruiting new prospects to the region.

Wharton's close proximity to Houston's growing populations, workforce and logistics makes it an attractive location for industrial and commercial expansions.

As a great location for both business and quality of life, Wharton is particularly interesting to global companies seeking the synergies and benefits of a major hub city.

WEDC is also working with the Wharton Chamber of Commerce, El Campo EDC and El Campo Chamber of Commerce to establish a comprehensive business database for all of Wharton County.

WEDC and El Campo CDC will the cost of the setup and maintenance of the platform.

The platform will allow all involved a chance to better position ourselves for growth.

See WEDC, Page 3

### **East Wharton County Progress 2017**

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Copies of this section will be available throughout the year while supplies last at the Wharton Journal-Spectator, Wharton Economic Development Corp. and Wharton Chamber of Commerce.

# On the cover

Wharton County Junior College recently hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for a new construction project at the college's Richmond campus. The project will include the renovation of 9,000 square feet of space and the construction of a new 3,600 square foot wing in order to expand the Cosmetology and Process Technology programs. Pictured at the ceremony, from left, are State Rep. John Zerwas, WCJC President Betty McCrohan, State Rep. Phil Stephenson and City of Richmond Mayor Pro Tem Barry Beard.

**Photo courtesy of Wharton County Junior College** 





Changing of the guard

David Schroeder, left, who was the Wharton Economic Development Corp.'s executive director for 16 years since the beginning, retired earlier this year. Chad Odem, right, is the new executive director.

### - WEDC

**Continued from Page 2** 

Through measuring impacts of initiatives and incentives to adding value to memberships for the chamber, the platform will inform intelligent decision making for our development organizations as well as the cities and Wharton County as a whole. The initiative also gives our county some solidarity which is of paramount import to outside investors.

WEDC along with Ron Sanders and the staff of Wharton Chamber of Commerce and Gwyneth Teves, Community Development Coordinator, are working to help develop a plan to make certain that the Central Business District and Monterey Square are vibrant and a crown jewel for years to come.

We would like to encourage all business owners and citizens of Wharton to pay close attention to the media outlets and get out and participate in planning the future of your community. Together we can push forward and keep Wharton moving in the right direction. We are

stronger when we are all working together for a common goal and this fiscal year's planning initiative gives all the opportunity to contribute.

We at WEDC also continue to give grants for façade and sign improvements for our local business startups and seasoned businesses that need faceliftds. Come see us or call or email to find out more details.

Chad Odom and Karen Heintschel continually network with site consultants, real estate agents and partners so that we can position our sites and assets as viable locations for outside investment.

Your contact for discussing these incentives and executing your business plan is Chad Odom or at the Wharton Economic Development Corp., 1944 N. Fulton St., Wharton, TX 77488; 979-532-0999, www.whartonedc.com, email chad@whartonedc.com.

Story written by Executive Director Chad Odom on behalf of the Wharton Economic Development Corp. board. For more information about the WEDC, call 532-0999.

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# PROGRESS 2017: WHARTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP.

# VEDC: How to promote our city

Special to the Journal-Spectator

If someone were to ask what Wharton has going for it, please take a look at the following list of items one might want to highlight as attractive attributes that our city possesses.

These attractions include:

- The upgrading of U.S. 59, the major four-lane highway through Wharton, to Interstate 69.
- Kansas City Southern railroad system.
  - Colorado River's water supply.
- CenterPoint electrical power willing to pay for the infrastructure to serve a large buyer.
  - Ample natural gas

• The lowest taxes in the region perks the interest of businessmen and women to establish industrial and retail enterprises in the city.

The following are other attributes to be chided:

- Wharton is one hour from Houston and the four international water ports places Wharton as a HUB for future expansions.
- Kansas City Southern Intermodal rail continues to grow 10 miles from Wharton.
- Wharton County Junior College with three satellites and the main campus in Wharton for specific customized training, is a key component to Wharton's growth.

In all, 22 colleges exist in the Houston region for training support requirements for Wharton's professional staffing.

- All required infrastructure lie within or adjacent to sites from 10 acres to 4.000 acres.
- Commercial airplanes travel to the city's Wharton Regional Airport or Houston's Hobby and Bush Intercontinental Airports.
- A business environment with a non-union workforce and low tort aids our businesses.
- No zoning exists throughout Wharton.
- Texas offers the lowest industrial utilities and natural gas costs for manufacturing companies.
- As an attainment community, a business receives environmental permitting on a timely basis.

Incentives marketed to attract businesses include:

• The Texas Enterprise Fund from

the State of Texas

- Skills Development Fund from the Texas Workforce Commission
- Texas Capital Fund for Infra-
- Texas Capital Fund for Real Estate Development
- Wharton Economic Development Corp. Infrastructure Assistance
- City and county Incentives through abatements or 380/381 Agree-
  - Industrial Revenue Bonds
  - New Market Tax Credits
- Wharton County's Freeport Exemption
- Manufacturing Sales Tax Exemp-
  - Foreign Trade Zone

Story written by Executive Director Chad Odom on behalf of the Wharton Economic Development Corp. board. For more information about the WEDC, call 532-0009.

# Who to contact in **East Wharton County**



 University of Houston/Coastal Plains **Small Business Development Center** 

1900 Fifth St., Bay City Satellite office: 1944 N. Fulton St., Wharton

Phone: 979-244-8466 or 979-320-4085 Kyle Smith, director

www.coastalplains.sbdcnetwork.net



 Wharton Chamber of Commerce & Agricuture

225 N. Richmond Road, Wharton Phone: 979-532-1862 Ron Sanders, executive director www.whartontexas.com helpdesk@whartonchamber.com



Wharton Economic Development

1944 N. Fulton St., Wharton Phone: 979-532-0999 Chad Odem, executive director www.whartonedc.com



· East Bernard Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture

P.O. Box 567, East Bernard, Texas 77435 Audrey L. Scearce Phone: 979-335-6558 www.ebchamber.com

icia s Thank you Wharton for another successful year! Alicia Rodriguez (979) 531-0678 1501 N. Fulton St. Wharton, Texas 77488

# PROGRESS 2017: INTERSTATE 69



# **Getting ready for Interstate 69**

City of Wharton finance director Joan Andel, left, and Wharton Mayor Tim Barker look at the Interstate 69 maps that the Texas Department of Transportation displayed during a public meeting in February at the Wharton Civic Center. U.S. 59 is being upgraded throughout the county to Interstate 69.

Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

# Interstate 69 making progress toward county

Interstate 69 is becoming reality as major construction and improvements near completion just north of the Wharton-Fort Bend County line.

This column updates regional progress and sounds the alert that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) will soon extend its six-lane superhighway from Kendleton to the Colorado River in Wharton.

Fort Bend County: In February 2013, the Texas Transportation Commission dedicated \$250 million toward five miles of interstate upgrades in nearby Rosenberg.

Phase 1 of the Rosenberg project bid out at \$136 million and included the 2.6 mile section between Texas 36 and FM 2759 (from the Wendy's/McCoys exit north to the Academy Sports exit).

Phase 2 brought improvements to the middle 2.4 miles conjoining Rosenberg to the Grand Parkway (Texas 99). This \$120 million construction project commenced in 2015.

Fort Bend County's remaining 10 mile stretch from Rosenberg to the Wharton-Fort Bend County line (near Kendleton) bid out in late 2015 for \$146 million with an anticipated completion date of fall 2018.

Wharton County: In 2013, the Texas Transportation Commission budgeted \$6 million for environmental studies and schematic corridor design running from one end of Wharton County to the other. Not long after, the city of El Campo accelerated its I-69 timetable by committing \$8 million of local funding to assist with engineering and construction upgrades along their southern U.S. 59 bypass.

**Progress 2017** 

Phase 1 of El Campo's

I-69 project bid out in 2016. The nearly complete 2.6-mile section adds one-way feeder roads with 12-foot lanes on both sides of U.S. 59 between the Texas 71 intersection (Jack in the Box) and Ricebelt Bridge at U.S. 59 south.

Phase 2 will upgrade El Campo's northern 1.3 miles of highway between Texas 71 and U.S. 59 north. This section of improvements is scheduled for bid in April 2019 at an estimated \$18.7million and should be complete by January 2021.

Next in line, TxDOT heads back toward Kendleton and our northern Fort Bent County line where transportation officials plan to extend Interstate 69 south to Hungerford and Texas 60. This connecting 6.4 miles of roadway will bid in January 2020 at an anticipated \$208 million price tag.

Moving along, TxDOT officials are currently securing final funding approval for



The two projects are scheduled to bid out in January 2021 at an estimated cost of \$225 million which includes the engineering and total rework of the FM 961 interchange (road to Crescent).

two related

projects that

will improve

interchanges

and extend

the six-lane

interstate

miles just

beyond the

River Bridge

in Wharton.

Colorado

another 2.5

It is important to note the city of Wharton continues working its plan to extend FM 1302 to I-69 thereby adding a second major interchange just north of Walmart and the hospital (currently vacant).

I-69's new footprint: TxDOT plans call for full interstate upgrades throughout Wharton County. Urban footprints will run from Kendleton to the city of Wharton which means there will be six concrete lanes (three running each direction) with a concrete middle barrier and one-way feeder roads on either side. Each main lane will be widened to 12 feet and a 12-foot shoulder added to the outermost section.

Upon reaching the FM 102 bridge

at Buc-cee's in Wharton, the interstate reduces down to a rural footprint with four asphalt lanes (two each direction), a concrete middle barrier (no grassy median), and one-way feeder roads. In time, this new rural footprint will extend past El Campo and on to our southernmost Jackson County line.

Current projections upgrading and connecting the 6.6 miles of interstate between Wharton and El Campo call for a tentative bid out in January 2027 at an anticipated \$99.5 million. Once completed, I-69 will stretch continuously for 133 miles from El Campo to just north of Sheppard.

My fellow citizens, what seemed impossible just a few years ago is now becoming reality. I-69 placards will soon be erected throughout our Wharton County and the interstates added improvements will decrease the risk of crashes caused by highway crossovers, relieve future congestion, and greatly enhance regional connectivity.

As your county judge, my primary objective continues to be preparing Wharton County for the future while always maintaining our unique small-town way of life.

Phillip Spenrath is the county judge of Wharton County. He writes a regular monthly column which is included in the Wharton Journal-Spectator and East Bernard Express. He can be reached at judge. spenrath@co.wharton.tx.us.

# PROGRESS 2017: HEALTH CARE

# Walk-In Clinic is now open in Wharton

Special to the Journal-Spectator/Express

El Campo Memorial Hospital recognized a need in the Wharton community and opened a Walk-In Clinic. ECMH has been reaching out to the Wharton Community in many ways and is happy to provide medical care in this area.

Discussions to open the Wharton Walk-In Clinic started in late May of this year, and the clinic officially opened on Monday, July 10.

The Walk-In Clinic is open seven days a week. Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday and Sunday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Walk-In Clinic has six exam rooms and offers diagnostic lab services. The purpose of the clinic is for patients to walk in at any time and be seen by a professional in a quick, efficient manner.

The clinic accepts most commercial insurances; Medicare; cash and credit cards. Individuals that have Medicaid

are offered the option of making a same day appointment at Mid Coast Medical Clinic in El Campo

The clinic is conveniently located with easy access — in front of the Wharton Walmart parking lot area, in the building facing Buc-ee's at 10358 U.S. 59 No. A in Wharton.

The Wharton Walk-In Clinic provides several professionals who will be providing care under the direction of Dr. Brooke Dorotik.

Individuals can check with their insurance providers to see if Dr. Dorotik is in-network with their selected policy. Fees vary based on the level of care that a patient's appointment requires.

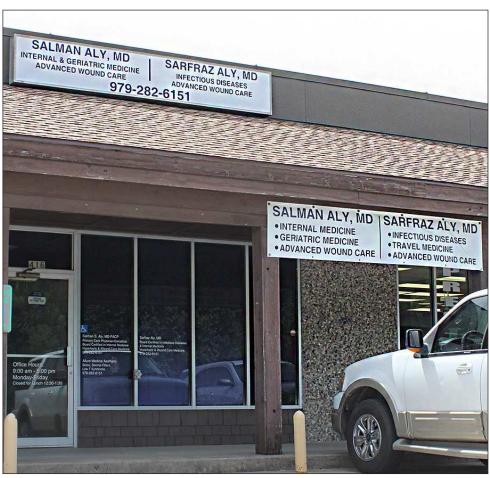
The Walk-In Clinic provides same day, no appointment necessary medical care.

Officials with the Wharton Walk-In Clinic say they are proud to be a part of the Wharton Community and look forward to developing lasting relationships with the members of Wharton and the surrounding community.



Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

El Campo Memorial Hospital has opened a Walk-In Clinic in Wharton. It is located in the strip center in front of Walmart which faces Buc-ee's.



Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

### New location

Dr. Salman Aly, MD is an internal medicine doctor who practices in Wharton and in Sugar Land. He recenly moved his office to a new location at 416 N. Alabama Road. Aly is affiliated with West Houston Medical Center, Oakbend Medical Center, St. Luke's Sugar Land Hospital and Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital.

# Walk-In Clinic

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# Walk-In Clinic

10358 Hwy 59 #A

(Located in the Wharton Walmart Parking Lot ) Wharton, TX, United States 77488

### PROGRESS 2017: CONSTRUCTION



**Briar Pointe Apartments** 

Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere Work is under way at Briar Pointe Apartments on Briar Lane in Wharton after last year's fire destroyed 60 units in June. All 60 units are being rebuilt, and when they are ready to occupy, it will help ease some of the housing shortage in the area.



**Progress 2017** 

**Colorado River Iron Bridge** 

Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

Texas Department of Transportation started renovation work on the Wharton Historic Truss bridge over the Colorado River near downtown Wharton at the beginning of the year. Plans call for the work to be finished by February of 2018 and the bridge re-opened.

# Work continues on reservoir

Special to the Journal-Spectator/Express

Construction continues at the Lane City Reservoir, which will be the first significant new water supply reservoir developed in the lower Colorado River basin in decades.

The Lower Colorado River Authority is building the reservoir off the main channel of the Colorado River, near Lane City in Wharton County.

The reservoir could add up to 90,000 acre-feet of water to the region's supply. It is the first project that will allow LCRA to capture and store significant amounts of water downstream of the Highland

The new reservoir will benefit the entire basin by helping reduce the amount of water otherwise required to be released from the Highland Lakes to serve downstream demands, including industrial and agricultural customers.

The reservoir is expected to begin operating in late 2018.



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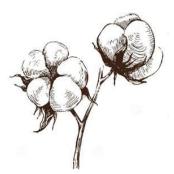
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# PROGRESS 2017: WHARTON COUNTY JUNIOR COLLEGE

# Wharton, Richmond campuses set for more than \$8.2M in new constuction, improvements

Special to the Journal-Spectator/Express

Wharton County Junior College will renovate and upgrade two of its four campuses this summer in order to provide more educational opportunities for area students.

More than \$8.2 million in new construction and improvements are planned at the Wharton and Richmond campuses, with the Richmond project expected to be completed by fall 2017, while the Wharton project has an estimated completion date of summer of 2018.

The Richmond project entails renovating 9,000 square feet of space and



building a new 3,600 square foot wing in order to expand the Cosmetology and Process Technology programs. Project cost is \$1.75 million, not including equipment

and furnishings. An official ground-breaking ceremony was held earlier this summer.

Through the project, Cosmetology will gain additional space and new equipment that will accommodate an additional 60 students.

Process Technology will receive a computer lab, an open lab, additional classroom space, a turbine generator, and distillation and neutralization skids.

"Both Cosmetology and Process Technology are popular programs that offer students a variety of career options," said Wharton County Junior College President Betty McCrohan.

"We feel that the project at the Richmond campus will allow us to provide more opportunities for these students while providing the educational and training opportunities necessary to meet community needs," she added.

At the main campus in Wharton, work this summer will begin on the renovation of 34,000 square feet of the Johnson Health Occupations Center as well as the creation of an 18,000 square foot addition.

See PROJECTS, Page 9



Photo courtesy of Wharton County Junior College

Wharton County Junior College Director of Facilities Management Mike Feyen discusses an ongoing renovation project outside the Johnson Health Occupations Center (JHOC) at the college's main campus in Wharton. Work began this summer on the renovation of 34,000 square feet of the JHOC building as well as the creation of an 18,000 square foot addition. The project will enhance the college's Division of Allied Health, which includes nine programs. Cost of the project is around \$6.5 million, not including equipment and furnishings. Expected completion date is the summer of 2018.



Photo courtesy of Wharton County Junior College

Wharton County Junior College's Carol Derkowski, an Instructor of Dental Hygiene and chair of the Division of Allied Health, points out some of the upgrades that are part of a \$6.5 million renovation project at the Johnson Health Occupations Center, located on the Wharton campus. The project, which kicked off this summer, includes the renovation of 34,000 square feet and the addition of another 18,000 square feet. An official groundbreaking ceremony will be announced shortly. Expected completion date is summer of 2018.

# - Projects at WCJC benefit Cosmetology, Process Technology

#### **Continued from Page 8**

A groundbreaking ceremony will be announced at a later date, with tentative project completion dates of May 2018 for the new addition and August 2018 for the renovation. Project cost is around \$6.5 million, not including equipment and furnishings.

WCJC's Division of Allied Health contains nine programs, including Associate Degree Nursing, Dental Hygiene, Health Information Technology, Human Services, Physical Therapist Assistant, Radiologic Technology, Surgical Technology, Vocational Nursing and Pre-baccalaureate Nursing.

"By renovating and expanding the Johnson Health Occupations Center, we can continue to offer students hands-on training that will provide them with the edge they need to be successful in these competitive careers," McCrohan said.

WCJC's Cosmetology program is a one-year certificate program that teaches technical skills as well as Texas Cosmetology Commission rules and regulations. The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the 2016 mean annual wages for hairdressers, hairstylists and cosmetologists in Texas as \$26,910, though upper end positions can pay as much as \$45,000.

WCJC's Process Technology program is a two-year degree program that prepares students to work as process operators in petrochemical plants, refining companies and other industries. The U.S. Department of Labor reports the 2016 mean annual wages for chemical plant and system operators in Texas as \$66,910.

WCJC Cosmetology Instructor Jacqueline Kuehn, center, helps student Marie Mizzell practice styling techniques on a mannequin while student Danielle Ortiz works on her techniques in the background. A construction project at WCJC's Richmond campus will allow the Cosmetology program to expand its services in order to train more students.

Photo courtesy of WCJC



Photo courtesy of Wharton County Junior College WCJC Process Technology Instructor Willie Myles instructs students in a laboratory at the college's Bay City campus. Process Technology will soon be able to provide Fort Bend County students with cutting-edge technological training thanks to a project at WCJC's Richmond campus.



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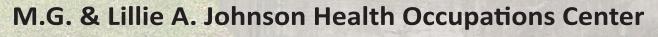
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A new 18,000 square-foot addition and 34,000-square-foot renovation is currently underway.

Completion is expected by summer 2018.

# PROGRESS 2017: SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPEMENT CENTER/WEDC

# Go in well prepared when asking for a loan

Question: When I started my small business two years ago, I tried to get a loan, but my bank turned me down. I was able to "bootstrap" it, but now I need a loan for some new equipment I want to buy so that I can grow my business. Should I try my bank again?

**Answer:** Banks are typically more willing to lend money to someone with a positive track record than someone with no experience, so you may have better luck this time.

However, before you go to your bank, or any other bank for that matter, take the time upfront to do your due diligence.

You will stand a much better chance of getting approved for a loan if you're well prepared with all the necessary documentation, a good feel (actual calculated projection not a guess) for how much additional capital you need and a clear explanation of how it will be spent and exactly how it is intended to benefit your business.

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Will your profit increase? Will it put you in a better position to capture a larger share of your available market?

Also, explore your options. Banks may specialize in certain types of loans, and it may be that another lender is a better choice. Start by pulling your credit score. A lender will do that when you apply for a loan, but since your credit score is an important factor in whether or not you will initially qualify, its better to be prepared in advance of the meeting.

Credit Karma (www.creditkarma. com) and www.annualcreditscore. com will both give you the information you need. Experian, Equifax and Transunion are the big three credit agencies.

Yours will be a blend of the three. Banks generally want to see at least a 680. They also want to see equity from the business owner, or "skin in the game" as it is known. Sufficient collateral to support the loan is also of importance.

Next step is to gather your financial statements and tax returns from the two most previous years you've been in business.

Put together some financial projections and a plan showing how having the new equipment will help your business make enough money to cover the purchase cost and the loan repayment note, without jeopardizing other important expense items (payroll, taxes, etc.).

If you need assistance determining how much money you will need or what your documentation should look like, contact the Coastal Plains UH Small Business Development Center for Matagorda and Wharton counties at 979-320-4085.

We have offices in Bay City, El Campo, Matagorda, Palacios and Wharton. We can help you put together your loan proposal request and provide specific business advice on how to move forward with this process. Our services are free and confidential, and we work by appointment.

The UH-Coastal Plains Small Business Development Center is a resource center of the Texas Gulf Coast Small Business Development Center, one of 15 centers representing the 32-county region.

For more information about the UH-Coastal Plains Texas Gulf Coast Center, go to www.coastalplains.sbdc-network.net. Our counseling services are "no cost" and based on "real world" business experience.

Kyle Smith is director of the UH-SB-DC's Coastal Plains office. He can be reached at 979-244-8466 or 979-320-4085.

# Small business seminar set Sept. 9 in Wharton

Special to the Journal-Spectator/Express

A powerful one-day seminar that's free and packed with information, tips and techniques you need in running your business is planned in September. Organizers say this is the all-in-one seminar that will help guide you to profit and success.

The seminar, which is for people interested in starting or expanding their small business, will be offered in Wharton on Saturday, Sept. 9 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the board room of the Wharton Economic Development Corp., which is located at the Wharton Civic Center, 1944 N. Fulton St. in Wharton.

It is co-sponsored by Wharton Economic Development Corp., Wharton Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture,, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), the City of Wharton, the UH-Coastal Plains Small Business Development Center and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Lunch will be provided, sponsored by the First State Bank.

The seminar, which has been held annually for the past 19 years, is aptly called "Exploring Business Opportunities."

It is geared toward entrepreneurs and those who are already in business but are wanting to take it to the "next level."

The agenda includes:

- Business Plans: How to prepare them, what should be included and when to update/revise them; presented by Joe Polichino, SCORE mentor.
- Cash Management & Record-Keeping: Understand the importance of cash flow and being able to project or forecast your needs; presented by Chip Woolf, SCORE Mentor.
- Lunch (30-minute break); presented by First State Bank, "What a Lender Looks for in a Loan Application."

• Marketing and Social Media: What should be included, presented by Amy and Vince Morales, Kapeesh LLC Marketing.

Kyle Smith, director of the UH-Coastal Plains Small Business Development Center, and Chad Odom, WEDC's executive director, will also be present to answer questions, offer suggestions, solutions and/or meet one-on-one with attendees as needed.

For more information or to register for the free seminar, call the Wharton EDC at 979-532-0999.

For direct small business assistance, contact Smith with the Coastal Plains SBDC at 979-320-4085.



# PROGRESS 2017: HEALTH CARE

# Committee hopes to have announcement soon about the future of Wharton's hospital

Health care are two words we hear every day, most often because we are confused. Where are we today, where have we been and where are we going?

Wharton and this whole area had the first doctor more than a century ago when Dr. G.L. Davidson opened Caney Valley Hospital in 1913. He was the only physician between Houston and Victoria. If we look at pictures of early downtown Wharton, we see horses and wagons, patients of Dr. Davidson.

The addition to Caney Valley Hospital was built in 1937. Dr. Bolton Outlar Sr. came in 1938. In 1942, we began to hear Outlar and Blair, At the end of World War II, others began to follow. As news spread about excellent care in Wharton, growth happened fast. This was the beginning of Outlar Blair Clinic and Caney Valley Hospital.

It was during those years that we heard names like Rugeley Blasingame Clinic and Gulf Coast Hospital. Great, skilled medical doctors and nurses were known throughout East Wharton County and beyond.

Wharton was fortunate during those years, and not only did the physicians keep us healthy, they and their families lived here and were really involved in all phases of community and leadership.

In the mid 1980s, the hospitals and clinics combined and moved to the highway, becoming South Texas Medical Clinic and Gulf Coast Medical Center. Wharton became the center of medical care for a six-county area.

In the meantime, the Medical Center in Houston became famous around the world. Amazing new technology was happening, new hospitals were being built and thousands of medical personnel were following.

This was the beginning of the medical decline in Wharton County. There were lean years. Fortunately, we have had a few faithful doctors who were and are here full time. In the meantime, Gulf Coast Medical Center and the emergency room closed.

As we have seen the growth of Fort Bend County, we have seen major hospitals opening in Sugar Land. One day in 2009, I was driving to downtown Hous-



ton for a meeting, looked to my right on this side of Sugar Land at a new street called Williams Way. Suddenly machinery, piles of dirt and a sign saying future home of Oak Bend Medical Center, Williams Way campus.

My thoughts that day, and a few years after, was why in the world would someone build a hospital way out here? I was skeptical then but my, have we watched the growth coming our way.

Today, we are back in East Wharton County. With the closure of our emergency services, the Wharton City Council saw the need for health care. The city is not in the hospital business, but officials appointed a committee with the task of finding the best source of health care for this community.

I happen to be one of those on the committee, and I assure you the task has not been taken lightly. Has it been a committee that always agreed? Of course not, but each person has listened, learned and respected each other and each idea.

We have met weekly for two hours each since the first of the year I believe. Hospitals have made presentations, visits have been made and numbers studied. A lot of study went in to the pros and cons of a bond issue. We believe there will be an announcement before too long. We think you will be pleased.

Billie Jones is a longtime resident of Wharton who writes a weekly column in the Wharton Journal-Spectator on items of interest about the Wharton community. She can be reached at bhjones6@sbcglobal.net.

# **Exploring Business Opportunities**

A powerful one-day seminar that's packed with information, tips and techniques you need in running your business. This is the all-in-one seminar that will help quide you to profit and success!

Please reserve your seat by calling (979)532-0999

Saturday, September 9, 2017 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Wharton Civic Center 1944 N. Fulton Street

# **OUR AGENDA:**

<u>Business Plans</u>: How to prepare them, what should be included and when to update/revise them *Presented by Joe Polichino, SCORE Mentor.* 

<u>Cash Management & Record-Keeping</u>: Understand the importance of cash flow and being able to project or forecast your needs. *Presented by CHIP WOOLF*, *SCORE Mentor*.

Lunch (30 minute break) - "What a Lender Looks for in a Loan Application" FIRST STATE BANK

<u>Marketing:</u> & <u>Social Media</u>, what should be included *Presented by Amy & Vince Morales Kapeesh LLC Marketing*.

Kyle Smith, (Director of the U of H/Coastal Plains Small Business Development Center), Chad Odom(WEDC Director) will also be present to answer questions, offer suggestions, solutions, and/or meet one-on-one with attendees as needed.

### SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR EVENT CO-SPONSORS:

SCORE, City of Wharton, Wharton EDC, Wharton Chamber of Commerce, the U of H/Coastal Plains Small Business Development Center, and the U.S. Small Business Administration

**Special thanks to our Luncheon Sponsor:** 





14

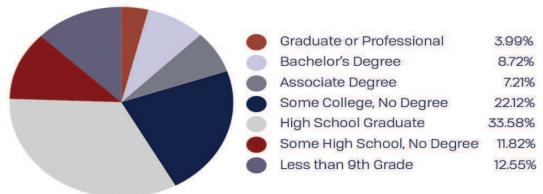
# City of Wharton



# POPULATION

23,403

2017 Estimated Retail Trade Area Population



### AGE DISTRIBUTION AND RACE

White - 62.94% 9 Years and Under - 13.39% 10-17 Years - 11.51% Black or African American - 19.06% 18-24 Years - 9.21% American Indian/Alaskan - 0.54% 25-34 Years - 12.14% Asian - 0.48% 35-44 Years - 11.17% Native Hawaiian/Islander - 0.03% 45-54 Years - 11.81% Other Race - 14.73% 55-64 Years - 13.33% Two or More Races - 2.22% Hispanic or Latino - 37.88% 65 Years and Over - 17.44%

Median Age 38.4 Average Age 39.4

# HOUSEHOLD

### AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$ 5 6 , 8 9 6

### MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$ 41.645

#### PER CAPITA INCOME

\$ 2 1 . 8 3 1

### OPPORTUNITY IN WHARTO

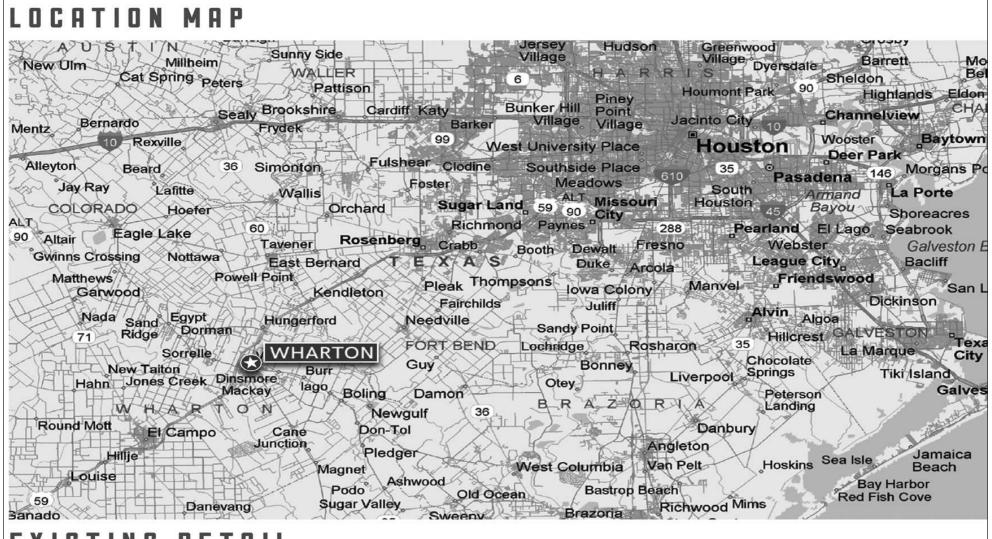
- Clothing & Accessories Stores
  Sales Leakage = \$10,582,949
- Sporting Goods Stores
  Sales Leakage = \$2,807,437
- Food Service & Drinking Places
  Sales Leakage = \$15,273,822

- Potential Retail Sales \$307,477,899
- Actual Sales \$242,509,712
  - Sales Leakage \$64,968,187

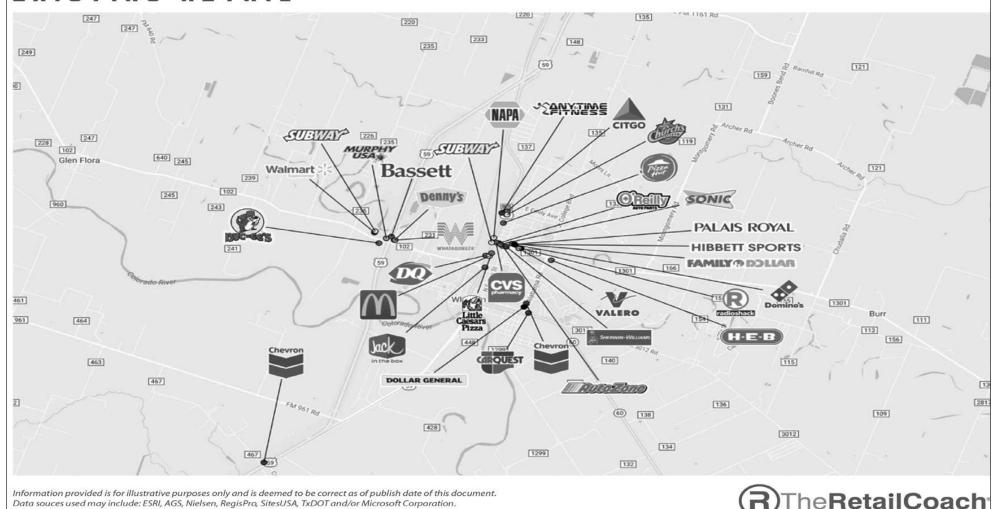
Chad Odom, DFCP, Executive Director

Wharton Economic Development Corp. 1944 North Fulton Street Wharton, Texas 77488 Phone 979.532.0999 wedc1@sbcglobal.net www.whartonedc.com





Data souces used may include: ESRI, AGS, Nielsen, RegisPro, SitesUSA, TxDOT and/or Microsoft Corporation.



### **Major East Wharton County employers**

	,		<i>,</i>	
	<u>FIRM</u>	<b>LOCATION</b>		<b>EMPLOYEES</b>
1.	Leedo's Cabinetry	East Bernard	Cabinets	405
2.	Wharton County Junior College	Wharton	Education	363
3.	Wharton ISD	Wharton	Education	339
4.	Wharton County Foods	Boling	Egg farm	235
5.	Wharton County	Wharton County	Government	234
6.	Nan Ya Plastics	Wharton	Rigid PVC film	230
7.	Walmart Super Center	Wharton	Retail	200
8.	Pepco	Lane City	Specialty supplies	80-200*
9.	H-E-B	Wharton	Retail	154
10.		Boling	Education	145
11.	J-M Eagle Manufacturing	Wharton	PVC pipe	139
12.	East Bernard ISD	East Bernard	Education	132
13.	Hlavinka Equipment	East Bernard	Retail	125
14.	Memorial Hermann Group	Wharton	Health care	102
15.	Buc-ee's	Wharton	Retail	100
16.	City of Wharton	Wharton	Government	99
17.	King Ranch	Wharton	Ranch	90
18.	Lamberti	Hungerford	Fluids	72
19.	Dorian Tool Co.	East Bernard	Machine tools	60
20.	Exelon	Wharton	Power plant	45
21.	Helena Chemical	East Bernard	Fertilizer supplier	35
22.	Maxim Production	Boling	Fertilizer	32
23.	Glen Flora Farms	Glen Flora	Agricultural produc	ts 30
24.	Texas Dept. of Transportation	Wharton	State agency	26
	Fun Town RV	Wharton	RV dealer	26
26.	Prime Eco Group	Wharton	Chemicals	25
	Don Elliott Autoworld/Ford	Wharton/East Bernard	Auto dealer	22
28.	INFRA Technology	Wharton	Gas processing pla	nt 15
29.	Genco	Wharton	Tire recycling	14
	Von-Wil Ford	Wharton	Auto dealer	14
	Traditions Chevrolet	East Bernard	Auto dealer	14
l				

\* Seasonal

Source: Wharton Economic Development Corp. (as of July 15, 2017)

File photo

Employers set up booths at the Wharton Civic Center to draw in prospective employees during the annual Business Expo and Job Fair in 2016. The 2018 event will also be in Wharton.

# Business Expo helps job seekers

If you're looking for a job, Wharton County has an annual event that helps unite employers with employees.

The Wharton County Business Expo and Job Fair has been held for 15 years, and the event traditionally rotates between the Wharton and El Campo civic centers.

This year's event was held Feb. 14 in El Campo. The event featured around 40 companies who showcased their businesses and recruited new employees.

The date hasn't been set yet for the 2018 event, but it is usually held in early to mid-February. Anyone interested should contact the Wharton Ecomonic Development Corp. at 532-0999 for more information.

The Wharton Journal-Spectator and East Bernard Express are also sources for job opportunities throughout the year through the help wanted ads in the classified section.

—Keith Magee

# New, remodeled, improved businesses

- H243 Studios 243 W. Milam St. New business in existing building
- Allied Recovery Services Inc. 205 N. Richmond Road New business in existing building
- Exceptional Eye Care 202 E. Boling Hwy. New business/new building
- RV Village Wharton LLC 2601 N. Richmond Road New business/new RV park
- The Family Clinic 307 W. Milam, Suite 311 New business in existing building
- Wikki Wikki Hawaii Shaved Ice 807 N. Alabama Road New business/new building
- Reitz Real Estate LLC 2103 N. Richmond Road New business in existing building
- El Angel Event Center 620 N. Alabama Road New business in existing building

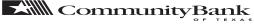
- Rapid Bail Bonds 209 E. Burleson St. Interior remodel
- Buc-ee's 10484 U.S. 59 Business remodel/addition (vestibules)
- Wharton Regional Airport 714 Robert Vonderau New buildings/addition (hangars)
- Armadillo Motors 620 N. Richmond Road New business in existing building
- Mariachi Bar 301 W. Caney St. Existing building/new owner
- Ambition Nutrition Shakes & Smoothies 2340 N. Richmond Road New business in existing building
- El Campo Memorial Clinic 10358 U.S. 59, Suite A New business in existing building

Source: City of Wharton

# COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY.



As an independent bank, we're here not only to help our friends and neighbors reach their dreams, we're here to help our community reach its greatest potential. It's a commitment to community that comes naturally from a **Bank Where U Live.** 



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# PROGRESS 2017: EAST BERNARD

# City officials planning for economic growth

Economic growth is so important to small communities. It is imperative that the city of East Bernard becomes competitive with the cities around us.

We should be able to give our residents the opportunity to benefit from the revenue business and industry can provide.

For the last several months, City Hall officials have been working hard on planning for economic growth. We have started the process of evaluating our strengths and weaknesses. We are in the beginning stages of creating new policies and procedures to ensure that we have controlled growth in the city of East Bernard.

One of the projects we are excited about is the extension of utilities to our Industrial Park. The completion of this project will allow us to offer public utilities to businesses that are interested in bringing business to the city, as well as giving our current businesses opportunities to expand. The city will be working with the Wharton County Water District No. 2 on this project.

We were recently granted a Texas Capital Fund grant for a portion of the project. This grant is awarded when you can show that your economic development project will bring employment opportunities to your area.

We have partnered with Leedo

**AUDREY** L. Scearce

EAST BERNARD CITY SECRETARY



Cabinetry, KW Industries, and Shoppa's Farm Supply to do just that. We are also applying for a grant through the Economic Development Administration. This grant will help us fund the remainder of the project.

The year 2017 has been one of planning and really trying to gain some insight on where we should focus our resources first. Planning will never end for us. We are always looking for ways to make East Bernard a great place to

We will be calling on our citizens to help in the process of planning in the near future. Please be on the lookout for future town hall meetings and surveys. Your input is important to us.

Audrey L. Searce is city secretary for the city of East Bernard. She writes a column which appears periodically in the East Bernard Express. She can be reached at 335-6558 or ebcityhall@ gmail.com.



Photo by Shaina Bowen

### New Pct. 2 Annex Building

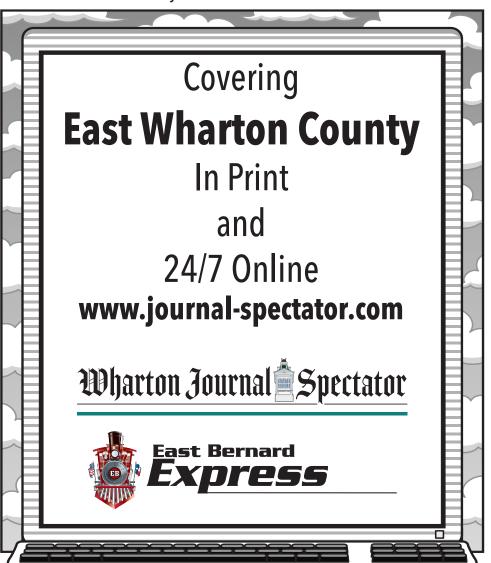
New Pct. 1 Commissioner Richard Zahn, right, visits Pct. 2 Constable John Szymanski in his spacious new office. Officials held an open house in January for the new Pct. 2 Annex in East Bernard, which houses the constable's office, as well as Pct. 2 Justice of the Peace Cynthia Kubicek and her courtroom.



**Courtesy photo** 

### Yoga Studio opens in East Bernard

Camille Mica, owner and certified yoga teacher at New Breath Yoga & Movement in East Bernard, shows her warrior pose during one of her classes. The new yoga studio is located upstairs above Glory Bean Coffee Co. For more information, call Mica at 281-832-5369 or email newbreathyoga@gmail.com.



# PROGRESS 2017: NEW/RELOCATED BUSINESSES





Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

### Barcenas Insurance/Rapido Bail Bonds

Rapido Bail Bonds and Barcenas Insurance Agency opened up a new location at 209 E. Burleson St. in Wharton.



REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR

EMAIL: KOLACNY.SURVEY@GMAIL.COM

140 S. HOUSTON STREET | WHARTON TEXAS 77488 | 979.532.8056

#### Wikki Wikki Hawaii Shaved Ice

The new Snow Cone stand Wikki Wikki opened up just in time for the summer heat. The snow cone stand features food and sweet treats. Wikki Wikki is located 807 N. Alabama Road.

# **Coyote RV Resort**

"Relax...You're Home"



Charles and Linda Howard 272 Greendale Rd. Wharton, Texas 77488 979-533-5959

## PROGRESS 2017: DOWNTOWN



Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

### **K&D Design**

K&D Design, owned by Kaytee and Debbie, a fun-loving mother-daughter team, opened their shop in Monterey Square in Wharton a couple of years ago and and recently moved to their new, larger location 246 W. Milam St. Their shop is filled with stylish ladies' apparel, including plus-sized clothing, jewelry, home decor, candles, baby and wedding gifts and more.



Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

#### H243 Studio

H243 Studio, located at 243 W. Milam St., opened in January and offers a full list of services, including tanning and spa services.

# New seniors program to be headed by Wootton

Special to the Journal-Spectator/Express

Mid Coast Medical Clinic is getting ready to start a new senior citizens' program offering activities, informative talks and travel for seniors in and around Wharton County. Mid Coast Medical Clinic welcomes Carol Wootton as the Senior Program Coordinator.

Senior TREK (Travel; Recreation; Education; Knowledge) will offer luncheons, talks, and travel. Plans are underway for a historical trip to Castroville and a Murder Mystery Dinner at the Railroad Café in Rosenberg. Dates, times and fees will be available soon for these and other events.

Mid Coast Medical Clinic is offering a reward program for active patients. Patients utilizing MCMC will receive advanced notice, rewards and priority boarding on all trips.

The program is in the development stages. Plans are to have a welcome luncheon in the near future to discuss the program and get individuals registered/signed up.

Wootton has many years of experience coordinating senior citizen events, and Mid



Coast Clinic officials say they are honored to have her as one of their new team members.

Individuals interested in registering for the Senior TREK program can contact Donna Mikeska at El Campo Me-

morial Hospital at 979-578-5261 or dmikeska@ecmh.org or Wootton at 979-533-2390 or carol.wootton@yahoo.com - Individuals need to leave their names, addresses and phone numbers. The group will get in touch with new prospective members. Donna Mikeska, ECMH Marketing Coordinator will also assist Carol with some of her events/activities.

MCMC is looking forward to serving the Senior Citizens of Wharton County and surrounding area. It is proven that active and engaged senior citizens live a happier and healthier life.

### **Introducing Mid Coast Medical Clinic's** Senior Citizen's Program **Introducing:**







**Carol Wootton Mid Coast Medical Clinic** Marketing and Senior Program Coordinator

Senior TREK will be providing opportunities for seniors to participate in luncheons, informative talks and travel.

Contact Carol Wootton or Donna Mikeska for information and registration.

#### **Mid Coast Medical Clinic**

303 Sandy Corner Road, El Campo, Tx 77437

Carol: 979-533-2390 carol.wootton@yahoo.com dmikeska@ecmh.org Donna: 979-578-5261



Proud Supporter of East Wharton County thru: Mozelle VonDerAu Memorial Scholarship, for local High School Students, The Annual Wharton County Freedom Fest OPEN CAR SHOW, The Crisis Center...



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