

EAST WHARTON COUNTY PROGRESS 2016



LANE CITY RESERVOIR CONSTRUCTION MOVING FORWARD

Wharton Journal  Spectator

Wednesday, July 27, 2016



East Bernard
Express

Thursday, July 28, 2016

Kolkhorst, LCRA host local leaders on Lane City Reservoir project tour

Special to the Journal-Spectator/Express

LANE CITY — State Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst and the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) hosted a tour on Wednesday, June 22 to provide local leaders in the area with the first look at the Lane City Reservoir since construction began in January.

Scheduled to be completed in 2018, the reservoir is located off the main channel of the Colorado River in Wharton County. With a cost of approximately \$250 million, the project is expected to add 90,000 acre-feet of firm water to the region's water supply.

"This is the first significant Colorado River project of its kind below the Austin dams in decades, as well as being the first reservoir built in Texas in over 30 years," said Kolkhorst. "With the recent floods, if the project had already been built, this reservoir could have been filled almost seven times in the last few months of rain. That's why this reservoir is a giant step forward in meeting the future water needs of our region."

The Lane City Reservoir is being built to take advantage of the wetter climate in the lower basin of the Colorado River and is designed to capture and store runoff generated by rain that flows downstream of Lake Travis and the Austin area. The Lane City Reservoir will store more water than Lake Marble Falls, Lake Austin and Lady Bird Lake combined.

"Many thanks should go to the past and present LCRA board members and their staff for making this plan a reality," said Kolkhorst. "I am hopeful that this off-channel reservoir can serve as a model for other basins across the state that face similar water demands and scarcity."

Additional benefits of the new reservoir include lessening the demands on the Highland Lakes by improving the supply and reliability of downstream



Lower Colorado River Authority graphic

water for agriculture and industry. The project is also expected to reduce the chance that "interruptible water contracts" will be forced to be cut back or cut off to the lower basin during future droughts.

On the cover

State Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst and the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) hosted a tour in June to provide local leaders in the area with the first look at the Lane City Reservoir since construction began in January. Pictured from left are LCRA Board Member Steve Cooper (Wharton County), LCRA Board Member Joe Crane (Matagorda County), LCRA Executive Director Phil Wilson, State Senator Lois Kolkhorst, former LCRA Board Member Scott Arbuckle, Fayette County Judge Ed Janecka and Wharton County Judge Phillip Spennwrath.

Courtesy photo

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Exploring Business Opportunities

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Saturday, September 10, 2016

9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

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OUR AGENDA:

Business Plans: *How to prepare them, what should be included and when to update/revise them. Presented by JOE POLICHINO, SCORE Mentor.*

Marketing: *How to prepare a marketing plan; what should be included, and how to capitalize on the Internet and Social Media Platforms. Presented by MIKE PRICE, SCORE Mentor.*

Social Media Platforms: *Understand how to capitalize on the internet. Presented by AMY & VINCE MORALES with Kapeesh Marketing.*

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.*

What a lender looks for: *Branch Manager/representative will explain what information they need. Kyle Smith, (Director of the U of H/Coastal Plains Small Business Development Center) & David Schroeder (WEDC Director) will also be present to answer questions, offer suggestions, solutions, and/or meet one-on-one with the attendees as needed.*

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR EVENT CO-SPONSORS:

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



1610 N. Alabama Road,
Wharton, TX 77488
979-282-2555

Housing seminar a success; another planned

Special to the Journal-Spectator/Express

Earlier this summer, 15 participants attended a USDA Housing Seminar at the Wharton Civic Center.

Megan Sharp, Area Specialist, from USDA Rural Development discussed programs available to rural residents for the purchase of a home or to repair homes they already own. She also covered topics of loans for buying a home, loans for repairing your home and grants for repairing your home.

Applications were distributed for new low income home loans and repair project. Sharp mentioned the low income loans are 100 percent financed for 30-38 years at a fixed interested rate of 3 percent today. Deborah Wright said there are funds available today, and the first step is completing the application and being pre-approved for the loan.

Funds are also available through Rural Development's 504 Home Repair loan and grant program. The program is available to low income recipients to make essential repairs to modernize and repair homes, and to remove health and safety hazards.

Most repairs completed under the program are for roof, window and door replacements, as well as electrical, plumbing and air conditioning upgrades as well as other repairs needed to increase the home's energy efficiency and overall comfort and quality. Renovations to make a home wheelchair or handicap accessible are also considered.

Also, the Guaranteed Home Loan Program which goes through a lender requires applicants maximum income cannot exceed \$75,000.

The City of Wharton and Wharton Economic Development Corporation sponsored the event, and officials were pleased with the good turnout.

Future plans are to have another USD Housing Seminar some time after the beginning of the next fiscal year after Oct. 1.

To find out more information about when a future seminar will be held, call Sharp at 979-549-0215 or email megan.sharp@tx.usda.gov. You can also contact David L. Schroeder at the Wharton Economic Development Corp. at 532-0999.



Courtesy photo

Megan Sharp presents a Housing Seminar to area residents. Another seminar is planned during the next fiscal year sometime after Oct. 1.

Annual small business seminar planned for Sept. 10 in Wharton

Special to the Journal-Spectator/Express

A free seminar for people interested in starting or expanding their small business will be offered in Wharton on Saturday, Sept. 10 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 CommunityBank of Texas in Wharton.

The seminar, which has been held annually for the past 18 years, is aptly called "Exploring Business Opportunities."

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

Exploring Business Opportunities

- What: A seminar for people interested in starting or expanding their small business
- When: Saturday, Sept. 10
- Time: 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Place: Wharton EDC Board Room, 1924 N. Fulton St., Wharton
- Admission: Free, lunch included
- Information: 979-532-0999

Joe Polichino, a mentor with SCORE of Houston, will lead the seminar session in discussions concerning preparation of a written business plan including financial projections.

Mike Price, another SCORE volunteer/consultant will lead the next session, focusing primarily on marketing and advertising.

A session on social media platforms will be presented by Amy Morales with Kapeesh Marketing.

Chip Wolfe with SCORE will key on the importance of cash flow, revenue and expense projections and good accounting practices.

Kyle Smith, director of the UH-Coastal Plains Small Business Development Center, will be present during the session to answer questions concerning small business loans and possible means for financing the project.

David Schroeder, Wharton EDC's executive director, said the organization's mission goes beyond just attracting new employers and taxpaying entities to Wharton to also helping local citizens start or expand their respective business.

Answering questions in a myriad of areas along with providing guidance throughout the process, from start to finish, is a key component.

"The seminar is designed to assist owners, managers and potential entrepreneurs to identify basic management problems, determine their causes and to help participants become better managers," Schroeder said.

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.

2015-16 new businesses, additions, renovation projects

The Wharton Economic Development Corp. has provided the following list of individuals and businesses who have new projects, renovations or additions during the previous year:

- Hinze's Country Kitchen
- CenterPoint Energy CNP new sub-station for Exelon expansion
- Infra Technology
- Dr. Faris Ohan, Exceptional Eye Care relocation
- Party Fashion & Gift Shop
- R&L Barber Shop
- Eastgate Plaza renovation
- Hibbet Sports
- Dollar Tree
- Kapeesh, Amy Morales
- PCS cellphone store
- Regent Adult & Pediatric Clinic
- Bunetello Wrecker service
- Country Living RV Park
- Sacred Care Transportation
- Provisions Bistro, Debra Medina
- Lindsay Tijerina, M.D. Micro Family Practice
- HealthStar International Inc. relocation
- Amgref Group relocation
- Rubies Healthcare, Inc relocation
- Health Care Synergy relocation
- DOLRAC Healthcare Services, Inc. relocation
- Nursing Bridges Healthcare, Inc. relocation
- Tripple V's Services Inc. relocation
- Multi-Service Healthcare, Inc. relocation
- AZURE Healthcare relocation
- Ascentia Healthcare Inc. relocation
- Fort Bend Healthcare Inc. relocation
- Jestco Healthcare Inc. relocation
- Comfort Choice Healthcare Inc relocation
- Colonial Healthcare Inc. relocation
- Reeds Auto Service
- Separate Auto repair behind Reeds
- Pizza Hut & Wing Street
- Tax Office next to Little Caesars Pizza
- The Barber
- Tax Office & Financial Advisor
- Harris RV Park / Monty Harris
- Classic Club / Bailey's renovations
- 125 Fulton / Joshua Wagner renovations
- Share
- Storage Building Sales Office
- Donut Shop renovations
- Goedken Antiques
- Sonya's
- Highline Motors
- Houston Auto Ranch
- Texaco Truck Stop renovation on U.S. 59
- Taqueria Las Regias
- Trailers Sales on Richmond
- Texas Farm Bureau remodel
- Prosperity Bank renovation
- Lamberti expansion of 12,000 square feet

Major East Wharton County employers

<u>FIRM</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>PRODUCT</u>	<u>EMPLOYEES</u>
1. Leedo's Cabinetry	East Bernard	Cabinets	405
2. Wharton County Foods	Boling	Egg farm	350
3. Wharton County Junior College	Wharton	Education	362
4. Wharton ISD	Wharton	Education	336
5. Nan Ya Plastics	Wharton	Rigid PVC film	218
6. Wharton County	Wharton County	Government	234
7. Walmart Super Center	Wharton	Retail	200
8. Hlavinka Equipment	East Bernard	Retail	135
9. East Bernard ISD	East Bernard	Education	132
10. Boling ISD	Boling	Education	127
11. H-E-B	Wharton	Retail	125
Memorial Hermann Group	Wharton	Health care	125
13. Pepco	Lane City	Specialty supplies	120
J-M Eagle Manufacturing	Wharton	PVC pipe	120
15. Buc-ee's	Wharton	Retail	100
16. City of Wharton	Wharton	Government	93
17. King Ranch	Wharton	Ranch	88
18. Dorian Tool Co.	East Bernard	Machine tools	75
19. Lamberti	Hungerford	Fluids	69
20. Glen Flora Farms	Glen Flora	Agricultural products	45
Exelon	Wharton	Power plant	45
22. Maxim Production	Boling	Fertilizer	30
23. Texas Dept. of Transportation	Wharton	State agency	26
24. Helena Chemical	East Bernard	Fertilizer supplier	25
Simplot	Wharton	Chemicals	25
26. Gulf Coast Medical Center	Wharton	Health care	20
27. Prime Eco Group	Wharton	Chemicals	15
28. Genco	Wharton	Tire recycling	12
29. Wharton Journal-Spectator	Wharton	Newspaper/media	11

Source: Wharton Economic Development Corp. (as of June 15, 2016)

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PROGRESS 2016: WHARTON RETAIL

Eastgate Plaza shopping center has major renovation, adds new stores to lineup

By KEITH MAGEE
kimagee@journal-spectator.com

Wharton's retail scene received a big boost this year with a major shopping center renovation, along with several new stores.

New restaurants opened or moved to new locations, and another older small strip center has been torn down to add additional space to a strip center on Boling Highway.

One of the biggest changes came when a new owner took over the Eastgate Plaza shopping center, Wharton's largest strip center, located on Boling Highway.

Houston-based Williamsburg Enterprises purchased the Eastgate Plaza in November 2015, as well as a strip center in Bay City.

The new owners made good on promises to renovate the shopping center and bring in more new tenants.

The entire center received a fresh paint makeover, and the parking lot was repaved.

Here's a look at some of the new stores and other projects from the last 12 months:

Hibbett Sporting Goods

Hibbett Sporting Goods Inc., the national sporting goods retailer based in Birmingham, Ala., opened its second store in Wharton County earlier this year with its new location at Eastgate



Don Elliott, owner of Don Elliott Autoworld in Wharton and Don Elliott Ford in East Bernard, stands in his newly renovated showroom in Wharton following a holiday open house last December.

Staff photo

Plaza.

The store plans to employ eight full and part-time team members. Currently Hibbett has 104 locations in the state of Texas alone, including nearby locations in El Campo and Bay City.

"I'm excited that they are coming as well as the others anticipated because

of the new ownership of Eastgate Plaza," David Schroeder, executive director of the Wharton Economic Development Corp., said at the time the announcement was made last December.

"It's exciting for Wharton, and it's exciting as what's to come in the future," Schroeder said. "It's good news."

Dollar Tree

Dollar Tree Inc., North America's leading operator of discount variety stores, announced the plans for a Wharton store earlier this year. It opened on July 7.

See RETAIL, Page 7



Staff photos by Evelyn Carrierre

Hibbett Sports, left photo, and Dollar Tree, right photo, are two new stores that have opened in the Eastgate Plaza shopping Center on Boling Highway in Wharton.



Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

9er's strip center expansion

Buildings from an old strip center on the right were torn down recently so additions can be made to a new strip center that houses 9er's Grill at the corner of Boling Highway and North Fulton Street in Wharton. The new building will be extended and make more space available for new tenants to come in to the strip center.

— Retail scene grows in Wharton

Continued from Page 6

"Dollar Tree continues to grow," said Chelle Davis, Dollar Tree spokesperson. "We are proud to be part of the Wharton community and are looking forward to our July 7 grand opening."

Dollar Tree stores are open seven days a week and offer a fast, fun, and friendly shopping experience. The Wharton store is 9,982 square feet and will be located at 119 E. Boling Hwy. in the Eastgate Plaza shopping center. A store of this size typically employs from 12 to 20 associates.

Hinze's Country Kitchen

Michael Hinze, owner of Hinze's Bar-B-Que, opened his second Wharton restaurant earlier this year with a little different flavor.

Hinze's Country Kitchen is located on Texas 60 near the Wharton Veterinary Clinic in the building that formerly housed Diamond S Restaurant. Diamond S closed in 2015.

The new restaurant features home-style cooking, things like chicken-fried steak, meatloaf and hamburgers — but no barbecue. The restaurant has daily specials.

Hinze's Bar-B-Que will remain open at its location on North Richmond Road, and those who have a hankering for barbecue can continue to visit that location.

Don Elliott Autoworld

After undergoing major renovations for five months, Don Elliott Autoworld on North Richmond Road capped off the year with a Christmas holiday open house to celebrate completion for the work.

The dealership's showroom, service waiting areas, sales offices and restrooms have been restored and redone to give it a modern and polished look.

Included are 50-inch TVs for customers to watch while they are waiting for their vehicles.

There is a new mini cafe on your way from the showroom to the waiting area, or vice versa, supplied with free Starbucks coffee and bottled water.

The building that houses Don Elliott Autoworld in Wharton was erected in 1946. This is the building's second remodeling.

Pizza Hut/WingStreet

Pizza Hut, one of Wharton's longtime restaurants, moved across the street from its former location and expanded its menu to include a WingStreet.

The new restaurant, which opened earlier this year on Richmond Road, has increased its number of employees from 25 to around 35 to 40 workers.

Franchisee Mike Patranella said the new building is 2,500 square feet and will seat 72 customers. One of the big features not found in the old restaurant will be a drive-through window.

The old Pizza Hut building was built in the 1970s, Patranella said.

The old facility seated about the same amount of customers, but the kitchen didn't have room to prepare wings.

The new restaurant has five TVs, and all will be tuned to different channels showing sporting events.

Love's Travel Stop

McDonald's Chester's Chicken

Finally, after a construction delay because of the heavy rain in the late spring last year, Love's Travel Stop opened in October.

"It's very exciting," said Martin Santana, the store's general manager, as he watched customers come into the store for the first time.



Courtesy photo

Hinze's Country Kitchen on Texas 60 features home cooking and daily specials.



Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

Pizza Hut added WingStreet and moved into a new location this year on Richmond Road.

See LOVE'S, Page 18

WHARTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP.

WEDC is key to bringing, expanding businesses

Special to the Journal-Spectator/Express

The Wharton Economic Development Corporation's office provides services such as assisting with site selection analysis, providing data on key business facilities or sites, evaluating and applying for incentives, aid in the permitting process and providing introductions to community leaders.

Recent news or announcements include projects in Wharton receiving state recognition like \$700 million construction dollars for Exelon Generation new one combined-cycle gas turbine (CCGT) using new technology from General Electric will be completed in 2017. Exelon will make it among the cleanest, most efficient CCGT in the state and nation. This would add an additional 1,000MW to the already existing six unit 498MW natural gas plant.

At the same time, Wharton received a \$255 million injection from the Lower Colorado River Authority in building an off-channel reservoir on 1,700 acres, to collect 117 million gallons per year, or in the range of 10,000 to 20,000 acre-feet of water.

These projects follow the completion of construction on the Nan Ya Plastic Corporation expansion, Wilson Compressor Station and Infra Technology plant.

First 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 afforded by the railroad. Today, the city is prospering as the county seat and a measure of its growth may be credited to the evolving, formalized function of city and county government supported by the Wharton Economic Development Corporation.

The Texas Department of Transportation decided some 40 years ago to bypass the city of Wharton. Today, Wharton's eagerness to develop and grow partnerships with business giants in nearby Houston, is spotlighting Wharton as a place of opportunity. Saying this and having others realize our advantage is not an easy task for the Wharton Economic Development Corporation. The growing Houston market has Wharton strategically situated to utilize our local assets for industrial and commercial expansions.

The attractions include the upgrading of U.S. 59, the major four-lane highway through Wharton, to Interstate 69, Kansas City Southern railroad system, Col-



Lamberti USA is adding a 12,000-square-foot expansion to its facility in Hungerford.

Courtesy photo

orado River's water supply, CenterPoint electrical power, ample natural gas and the lowest taxes in the region perks the interest of businessmen and women to establish industrial and retail enterprises in the city.

David Schroeder and Karen Heintschel continually blast site consultants, realtors and partners that we can be their client's site of choice for future development because:

- 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's 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 Infrastructure

- Texas Capital Fund for Real Estate Development

- Wharton Economic Development Corporation Infrastructure Assistance

- City & County Incentives through abatements or 380/381 Agreements

- Industrial Revenue Bonds

- New Market Tax Credits

- Wharton County's Freeport Exemption

- Manufacturing Sales Tax Exemptions

- Foreign Trade Zone

Your contact for discussing these in-

centives and executing your business plan is David L. Schroeder at the Wharton Economic Development Corporation, 1944 N. Fulton, Wharton, Texas 77488; 979-532-0999, www.whartonedc.com, email wedc1@sbcglobal.net

Knowingly these incentives are offering to bring real cash to our local taxing bodies. The Wharton Economic Development Corporation actively participates in the economic development world to benefit the residents of Wharton first.

The new businesses, expansions, relocations and retention projects are aided through the sales tax generated. If City of Wharton can increase the tax base, through business growing in Wharton, it will allow residents to avoid an increase in city and county taxes.

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

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WCJC gets students ready for workforce

Special to the Journal-Spectator/Express

Wharton County Junior College: Small classes, affordability, personal attention and four campuses make it a great choice

Wharton County Junior College (WCJC), offers more than 40 Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, an Associate of Arts (AA) degree, an Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) degree, dual credit and concurrent enrollment courses, plus certificate, continuing education and workforce development programs.

Since WCJC's founding 70 years ago in Wharton, Texas, the college has grown to four campuses serving more than 7,400 credit students.

Modern, vibrant campuses in Sugar Land, Richmond and Bay City complement WCJC's traditional campus in Wharton that provides athletics and fine arts programs plus on-campus housing.

WCJC's Wharton campus offers transfer courses and more than 30 vocational programs.

The campus is home to eight allied health programs and programs in Public Safety, Computer Science, Engineering Design, Office Administration, Paralegal Studies, Early Childhood Studies, Automotive Technology and Cosmetology.

The Bay City campus offers transfer classes, too, plus courses leading to AAS degrees and/or certificates in Manufacturing Technology, Nuclear Power Technology and Process Technology.

WCJC's Sugar Land campus, housed on the campus of the University of Houston Sugar Land, is composed mostly of students working on the first two years of their four-year degrees.

Students can choose from dozens of core courses and continue their studies at four-year institutions. In addition to an AA degree with an emphasis of study in various disciplines, the Sugar Land campus offers the Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) and AAS degrees in Computer Simulation & Game Development, Construction Management, Digital Media, Early Childhood and Law Enforcement.

At the Richmond campus, students also take college transfer classes, as well as technical courses that train them in fast-growing career fields.

Numerous fields of study are available that lead to AAS degrees or certificates. Among them are five Computer Science programs, including the Cisco® Networking Academy® Program that prepares students to take the Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) and other internationally recognized Cisco certification exams.

Other Richmond campus programs are in Early Childhood, Emergency Medical Services, Engineering Design,



Photos courtesy of Wharton County Junior College

Students at work

ABOVE: Wharton County Junior College students inspect the undercarriage of a car during Automotive Technology classes. The program stresses hands-on training and knowledge of the most recent cutting-edge machines and tools.

RIGHT: Wharton County Junior College's Electronics Engineering program teaches students the finer points of circuitry, soldering and a host of other technical skills that will be utilized in the workplace.

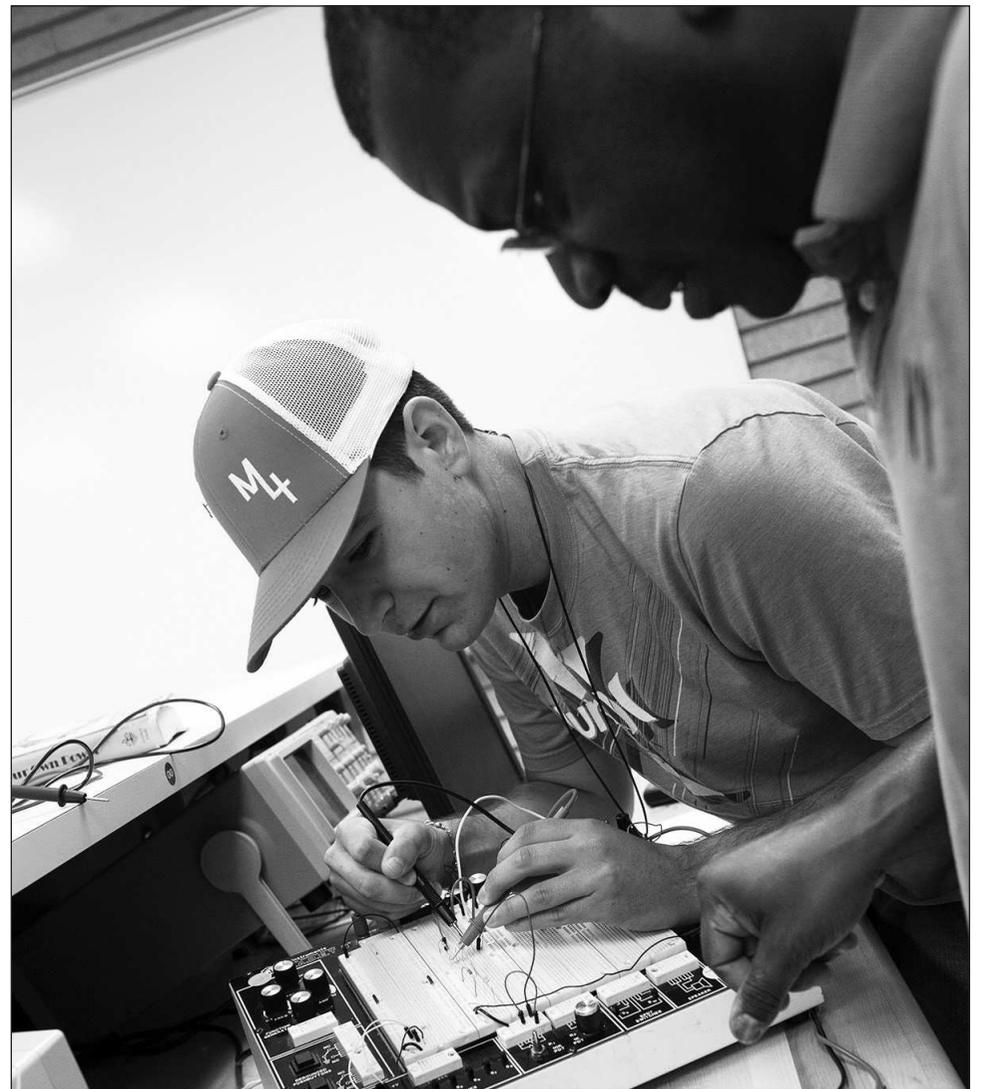
Human Services, Law Enforcement, Office Administration, Paralegal Studies, Police Academy and Process Technology.

WCJC continues to help students achieve their dreams with affordable tuition, smaller classes and personalized attention.

The Aspen Institute has recognized WCJC's exceptional student outcomes and the college is now competing for the coveted \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.

WCJC has formal and informal agreements with many colleges and universities regarding transferability of college credits, helping students save time and money by taking their core courses for four-year degrees.

To learn more, visit www.wcjc.edu.





Surgical Technology



Computer Simulation and Game Development



Cosmetology



Wharton County Junior College

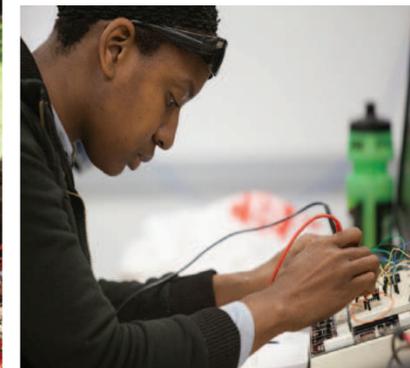
In two years or less, you can acquire the knowledge and skills to transfer to a four-year university or start work in a well-paid profession. With a variety of degree and certificate programs offering day, evening, in-person and online learning, there's no better time to pursue your dream.

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WHARTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & AGRICULTURE

Chamber is the front door to Wharton

When folks move here, or shop for products and services here, or start a business here, or are just visiting, the chamber of commerce is often the first stop.

We are your front door to Wharton. We'll help you move to the future.

We connect businesses to customers. We connect customers to businesses. For example, your virtual portal to Wharton, www.whartontexas.com, sent more than 17,000 business referrals to our business members in the first seven months of 2016 alone.

We have been that front door of Wharton for nearly one century. We



have served and continue to serve as the go-to source for tons of information about Wharton and the maps to get there. Where to obtain products and services. Where to go for government services, from building permits to water hookups. Where to go to find housing

or commercial real-estate. And a whole bunch more.

Simply put, we are in the business of helping people do business.

We support our businesses in many ways. We hold informational luncheons, produce a first-rate map, market Wharton as a destination for travel dollars, host and support festivals and special events, hold business networking events, showcase new businesses and members with ribbon cuttings and open houses, and more.

We also operate the digital portal to Wharton with our website. Our on-line business directory and map is well

traveled on our website, constantly connecting businesses and customers, as well as our email blasts and Facebook presence.

We also offer very competitive commercial electricity rates through our Wharton Chamber electric coalition.

How can we help you?

Ron Sanders is executive director of the Wharton Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture. He writes a column periodically in the Wharton Journal-Spectator. He can be reached at 532-1862. More information is available on the chamber's website, www.whartontexas.com.

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



Chamber of Commerce

• **Wharton Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture**
225 N. Richmond Road, Wharton
Phone: 979-532-1862
Ron Sanders, executive director
www.whartontexas.com
helpdesk@whartonchamber.com



Economic Development Corporation

• **Wharton Economic Development Corp.**
1944 N. Fulton St., Wharton
Phone: 979-532-0999
David Schroeder, executive director
www.whartonedc.com



• **East Bernard Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture**
P.O. Box 567, East Bernard, Texas 77435
Rhonda Morrow, president
Phone: 979-335-4433
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INFRA Technology to open its innovative gas-to-liquids facility

Special to the Journal-Spectator/Express

INFRA Technology will start commissioning its innovative gas-to-liquids facility in Wharton later this year.

The plant will become the first completed small-scale commercial GTL project. The plant will process 1 million cubic feet of natural gas to produce 100 barrels per day of synthetic oil.

The total budget of the project stands at \$15 million. The company will create 14 new jobs to operate and maintain the new plant.

INFRA's Chief Executive Officer Kaan Akyalcin emphasized that this is just the first stepping stone in the company's expansion into gas monetization projects.

"Our technology will allow us to unlock the value of many stranded gas resources, such as geographically remote and offshore fields," Akyalcin said.

In addition, INFRA will help oil resource holders to eliminate gas flaring, he said.

"It solves the pressing environmental problem and brings additional revenue for oil companies at the same time," Akyalcin said. "Our GTL technology turns inexpensive feedstock into high value-added product."

The plant will serve as a demonstration of INFRA's key competitive advantages and an important reference for future applications of the technology. Its synthetic oil is a premium product and can be used for producing valuable chemicals and transportation fuels. Modular standardized design allows for a very small footprint and quick turn-around time.

Finally, the cost of building and running the plant is significantly lower as compared to other GTL technologies.

INFRA is an international technology



Courtesy photo

Work is under at the INFRA Technology plant that will open later this year off U.S. 59 in Wharton.

company. INFRA developed, patented and implemented the next generation of the Gas-to-Liquids (GTL) technology, based on the Fischer-Tropsch synthesis process, for the production of light synthetic oil and clean liquid synthetic transportation fuels from natural and associated gas, as well as from biomass and other fossil fuels (XTL).

The main feature of INFRA's technology is direct conversion of natural gas into liquid synthetic crude.



Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

New electronic sign

Caney Auto Service, located on FM 102 in Wharton, has a new addition to its sign. It now has a section where they can display electronic messages.



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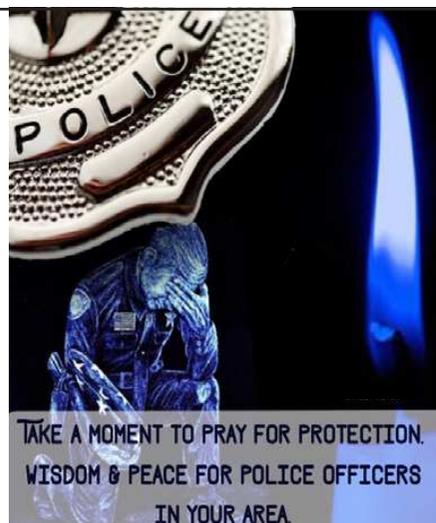
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PROGRESS 2016: WHARTON DOWNTOWN

New restaurants open with variety of food

By EVELYN CARRIERE
reporter@journal-spectator.com

The downtown area in Wharton has experienced a lot of change in the past few months. Businesses are starting to move in and the downtown area has come alive.

Two new restaurants have opened, with two different types of offerings.

The antiques shops and restaurants are bringing a more lively vibe to the downtown area of Wharton.

Here's a look at some of the new stores and restaurants:

Provisions Bistro and Market

Provisions Bistro and Market located at 301 West Milam St. opened in June off Monterey Square. Provisions offers a variety of different cuisines and services including a French inspired bakery, an in-house market straight from the farm and a very talented staff.

The food at Provisions is made from scratch, organic and locally sourced. The restaurant was made to inspire healthy and good eating habits to people in Wharton.

"Food, done well, nourishes the body and the soul," said Debra Medina, owner of Provisions.

Provisions Bistro is open for breakfast and lunch Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. until 2 p.m. The market is open from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m.

Taqueria Las Regias

Taqueria Las Regias located near the square at 204 N. Richmond Road, also opened in June. Taqueria Las



Provisions Bistro and Market opened for business in June on Milam Street in downtown Wharton.

Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

Regias is locally owned and operated by Iliana Fernandez and her sister Claudia Olmedo.

"Business has been great since we opened and we have had a lot of people come to eat here and pick up food, we are happy to have so many people support the business," said Maria Fernandez, daughter of Iliana Fernandez.

Taqueria Las Regias is open Tuesday through Saturday from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. and Sunday through Monday from

6 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Everything on the menu is made from scratch and the food varies from tacos to tortas sticking with the Mexican theme of the restaurant. If you follow Taqueria Las Regias on Facebook you can enter one of their many competitions to win free food or aguas frescas which are made fresh daily.

Windows on Milam Emporium

Owners, Cindy and Doug Smolik of

Windows on Milam are expected to open their new store on Aug. 15 next to the former location of Nonna's Emporium, which closed in late July.

The new location will not serve food like Nonna's did, but it is expected to carry collectables, furniture, florals, treasures and gifts.

"We are hoping to be open by the 15th. and we are excited about the new showroom," said Doug Smolik.



Taqueria Las Regias opened for business in June on Richmond Road in Wharton.

Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere



Windows on Milam Emporium is scheduled to open on Aug. 15 in downtown Wharton.

Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

PROGRESS 2016: HEALTH FIELD



Exceptional Eye Care is building a new facility on East Boling Highway in Wharton. They will soon be moving from their current home on Milam Street in downtown Wharton. Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

Exceptional Eye Care building a new facility

By **EVELYN CARRIERE**
reporter@journal-spectator.com

The Wharton area has had activity in several areas related in the health industry. Here's a look at what's going on in that area:

Beltone

Beltone moved in August from Bay City to Wharton in order to serve a larger number of people in the Wharton community. Nicole Goodalle the hearing instrument specialist at Beltone, has been working with hearing loss, aid and prevention for 10 years. Beltone has been a premier hearing care partner in Texas since 1940. They have brought the latest in hearing aid technology to help enhance an active lifestyle. Beltone offers free hearing test to anyone in the

area.

"We care about your hearing health and want to provide you with a lifetime of support and happiness," said Goodalle.

Beltone is located at 241 W. Milam St. in Wharton and has locations in Victoria and Brenham, as well.

You can schedule a free hearing test by calling 979-532-8300.

Exceptional Eye Care

Exceptional Eye Care is currently located at 313 W. Milam St. but it is about to move again in 6-8 months. The building under construction located off of East Boling Highway is large enough to accommodate several other doctors and to expand eye care in the area. The new building is expected to have newer product lines and more frame wear options.

"We are excited about opening the new location and expanding eye care in Wharton," said Mark Riojas, Manager at Exceptional Eye Care.

Exceptional Eye Care exams cover a number of medical conditions including an evaluation of your visual acuity, eye muscle function, eye alignment, peripheral vision, pupillary reaction to light and accommodation, focusing ability, amount of prescription needed to provide the best corrected visual acuity at distance and near, health of the eyelids, conjunctiva, sclera, cornea, anterior chamber, lens, retina, vitreous, optic nerve, macula and blood vessels.

For now you can schedule an appointment at the downtown location until the new building is up and running. Call 979-532-4500 to schedule your appointment.

Regent Family Practice

Dr. Nathan Nguyen, along with partner Dr. Comay Pasdar, finished building their 8,000 square foot medical building off of Regional Medical Drive in April.

The new location of Regent Adult and Pediatric Clinic is open and ready for business.

Everyone is excited about the expanded space of their new location on Valhalla Drive.

With the recent addition of Dr. Comay Pasdar-Shirazi, the clinic was able to begin offering women's health and a pediatrician.

"The community has been incredibly warm and welcoming," said Pasdar-Shirazi. "I couldn't imagine being anywhere else."

Regent Family Practice is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.



Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere
Beltone opened a store on Milam Street in downtown Wharton last August.



Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere
Regent Family Practice opened its new office on Regional Medical Drive in April.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

In business, your destination is your reality

The last time you needed to drive to a place you had never been before, what did you do?

Did you load the specific address of your destination into your GPS, determine the best route, and then follow the directions?

Or, did you print out and follow your directions?

Or, did you do the opposite, that is, did you aimlessly follow random roads hoping that eventually you would arrive at your destination?

Sounds crazy, right that someone would consider this? But, that is exactly what millions of business owners do every year and it is the reason that less than 20 percent of businesses succeed long-term.

Building a successful business is not a collection of random acts of guess work and blind decisions. To realize your dream of a successful business you have to make your destination a part of your current reality.

Know your destination

When Alice was in Wonderland she asked the Cheshire Cat which road she should take. He asked her where she was going. Alice replied that she didn't know. Then came the much quoted Cheshire Cat reply of, "Then it doesn't matter which way you go".

That may work very well in fiction or for a day of exploring a new hiking trail. But it doesn't work that well in business. Most business owners don't start a business thinking "Okay, I'm going to sink all my money, time, and effort into this venture, play it by ear, and if I lose all my money that is perfectly OK."

Businesses are typically born out of a goal or a dream, such as "to be the best Italian Restaurant in the Tri-County area and be booked 3 months in advance" or "to grow my consulting business to \$2M in revenue by my fifth year in business."

These aspirations and reasons for even starting are also the destination — and they cannot be forgotten or buried in the frenzy of daily operations.

Your destination must be known and visible every day. It must be at the core of every decision you make.

Large corporations don't have a vision and a mission just as a fad. They have these plastered all over the walls because knowing your destination helps assure you will get there.

The same way you would enter the precise address of your destination on your GPS, so it is in running your business. Know your goals and keep them front and center to make sure you are in route to achieve them.

Importantly, take time to review your

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business plan or your 5 year strategic plan. What were the main objectives of your business? How do you describe your end-game?

Have milestones

When planning a long road trip, you typically break it down into small pieces. You study the map and learn the paces you will drive through. For example, when going from New York to Las Vegas, you may map stops in Ohio, Missouri, and Colorado. Because you prepared, and know what to expect along the way, and you know that if you see a sign that says "Welcome to North Carolina," you have veered off course.

Marking key places in your road map to business success is equally important. If you determine that for your business to thrive, you need to have 100 new clients by December, then reasonable milestones would be 25 by March, 50 by June, and 75 by the end of September.

By planning milestones in advance, you know whether or not you are on track to meet your goals. If by July you only have 30 new clients, you know you are off track, and need to reconfigure. On the other hand, if you have 80 new clients by August, then you know you are ahead and can consider revising your goal upward.

So review your strategic plan, and then break down your goals into shorter term objectives. Identify specific, objective measurements that you can take at precise intervals and map them out. These milestones can take many forms such as sales, revenue, profit, clients, etc. The important part is that you use quantifiable data that will tell you clearly if you are on track.

Institute scalable systems

People, especially business owners, dream of success. They have very vivid visions of the day they will "make it big," but so many are not really prepared for success. Very often a business owner will successfully pitch their product only to have to turn down a lucrative deal because they don't have the production capabilities.

Take the "Walmart Catch." Inventors of new products salivate to have their product on the shelves of every Walmart in the country. However, when Walmart

puts in an order, it's not for 100 units. It's for tens of thousands of units. Inventor after inventor has lost their distribution contract because they did not have the systems in place to allow them to quickly scale up their business. They did not have the manufacturing support to produce so many units.

They knew the destination, but were unprepared to arrive.

What is your end state? Do you have the systems in place to support having your dream come true tomorrow? Be prepared. Know exactly what it will take to run your business such as it will be at the end of your 5 year plan, and have all the partnerships, alliances, agreements, channels, support staff, and raw materials identified and ready to access when needed.

If you want outrageous success, you have to be outrageously prepared for it.

Your destination is your reality

Your everyday business operations need to be focused on your destination. When you are driving to the mall, you are driving to the mall. Every turn you take, every road you choose has one purpose, to get you to the mall. The same applies in your business. Every product you manufacture, every service you provide, every relationship you cultivate must align to your target end-state.

Avoid falling into auto-pilot. Actively work toward your "end" every single day. Be conscious of how every sale gets you close to hitting your next milestone.

Carefully measure your progress. If you are off track, don't wallow. Make adjustments and keep moving forward. If you are ahead, pin-point the actions that are giving you an advantage, and do more of that! Keeping your destination alive and visible in your daily functions will keep it as your current reality and help you prepare for the success that comes

with arriving!

And make sure you have a written strategic plan that maps out your end-vision and your periodic goals and milestones. If it's not written down, you can't achieve it. For the "not so faint of heart," and those who are willing to take the challenge, the U of H/Coastal Plains Small Business Development Center offers free one-on-one business counseling and consultation for clients in Matagorda and Wharton counties.

We also assist with business plan preparation, loan packaging and start-up assistance, market/promotion and even government contracting through the Procurement-Technical Assistance Center in Houston.

If you have questions, thoughts, ideas, etc. about starting your own business and would like to speak with someone about it, contact us for an appointment at 979-320-4085. Our office is at 1900 Fifth St. in Bay City. We also have satellite offices in Wharton at the WEDC office, 1944 N. Fulton St. (Wharton Civic Center), El Campo at Northside Education Center (707 Fahrenthold St.), and Palacios at the Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development Office (420 N. Main)

The UH-Coastal Plains SBDC is a business consulting and training center of the University of Houston Small Business Development Center Network, serving 32 counties in Southeast Texas. The UH SBDC Network is a program of the C.T. Bauer College of Business and a resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration. Other funding partners include the Bay City Community Dev. Corp., Wharton EDC, City Development Corp. of El Campo, and Matagorda County and Palacios EDCs.

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

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PROGRESS 2016: BOLING



The Boling Donut Shop is open for business on FM 1301 in Boling. Staff photo by Evelyn Carriere

New donut shop opens in Boling

By **EVELYN CARRIERE**
reporter@journal-spectator.com

BOLING — The Boling Donut Shop opened up in May on FM 1301.

Shop owners Teresa Keo and husband Nicholas Heng decided to open up the donut shop in Boling after their success with their current donut shop in

Wharton called Milam Donut Shop was so successful.

“Business has been really good in Boling, and we like being here,” said Keo.

Boling Donut shop serves traditional donuts, donut holes, breakfast sandwiches, breakfast tacos and muffins. Everything at Boling Donut Shop is handmade each morning.

Major subdivision being developed

By **KEITH MAGEE**
kmagee@journal-spectator.com

One of the largest developments in recent years is being planned in the Boling area.

The subdivision calls for 58 lots in Phase I of the development which will be known as Colt Ranch & Land Co.

It is located at 108 County Road 100 at FM 1301 near Boling. An office is staffed Monday through Friday. The office phone number is 979-318-3885.

“It’s a major subdivision,” said Monica Martin, who is in charge of the county’s permits and inspections.

Developer of the property is Tim Coffey. The 1,250 acres are located off County Road 100 in the Newgulf and Don Tol

area off of FM 1301.

The development is located within the boundaries of the Boling ISD.

Colt Land & Ranch Co. is a partnership between Coffee Management Co. and Sandstone Management formed to provide ranch style living through affordable owner financing.

The acreage is in the Wharton, Matagorda and Brazoria counties area. The ranchettes range in size from 1.75 acres to a little over 10 acres.

Phase I lots are available now. Phase II lots are also expected to be available featuring smaller tracts with greater privacy.

More information is available on the company’s website, www.coltranchlp.com.



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PROGRESS 2016: WHARTON PARKS



Staff photo (left)/Courtesy photo

Improvements have been made to the city's parks this year, including Riverfront Park, left photo, and Pleasure Park, right photo.

Improvements help with city's quality of life

The Wharton Economic Development Corporation has contributed \$150,000 in each of the last two fiscal years for park improvements.

Additionally, the revitalization of the Port of Wharton wooden structures at Riverfront Park is finished.

The city strives to make Wharton a better place to live. Sometimes all that means is improving Wharton's aesthetics such as landscaping. Earlier this year,

the city of Wharton updated the "Port of Wharton" along the Riverfront Park. The park was deemed as an official Texas local park, recreating and open space fund project thanks to the support of the City of Wharton, Texas Parks and Wildlife and Lower Colorado River Authority.

It was dedicated on June 24, 1992 when Garland Novosad was the mayor. Nearly 24 years later, the sign has been upgraded and its deck has been renovat-

ed. "These beautiful park improvements are assets to our community and speak to residents' quality of life," said David Schroeder, executive director of the Wharton EDC.

The parks continue to be used during festival cook-offs, reunions, organizational events, business and birthday parties, or just for fishing.

"We urge everyone to come out and

enjoy the parks," Schroeder said. If you wish to reserve the pavilions or have a function at any of the parks, contact Wharton City Hall at 979-532-2491.

— Love's Travel Stop opens with McDonald's, Chester's

Continued from Page 7

Hungerford and Wharton residents, as well as travelers along U.S. 59 — which will be upgraded to Interstate 69 in the future — have a new place to fuel and purchase meals and snacks. Love's

Travel Stop is located at 350 E. Walnut St., at the corner of U.S. 59 and FM 1161.

The 24-hour, 12,000-square-foot facility adds approximately 50 jobs to Wharton County. The travel stop provides customers with Chester's Chicken and

McDonald's restaurants, a game room, gourmet coffee, fresh fruit, merchandise, electronics and more.

Professional drivers can take advantage of seven showers, 83 truck parking spaces and a Love's Truck Tire Care center.



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PROGRESS 2016: EAST BERNARD



Photo by Shaina Bowen

From left, Christopher, Tommy and Donna Vacek at Vacek's Hardware.

Vacek's Hardware expands business

Vacek's Hardware, a longtime East Bernard business, has expanded its store on Main Street.

The larger business means they will be able to hold more products. They will carry more lawn and garden items, including grilling accessories, a larger se-

lection of paint, Stihl products and more.

In addition to more space in the store, there is a larger parking lot in the back and an awning all the way across the front.

They will also have a new and improved garden center.



Photo by Shaina Bowen

The new Wharton County Pct. 2 Annex Building in East Bernard is ready for business.

New Pct. 2 Annex Building ready

The Wharton County Pct. 2 Annex Building is ready for business in its new building on 736 Clubside Drive.

It is almost twice the size of the previous building at 3,530 square feet.

The new building includes a larger courtroom, larger office space, a break

room, record room and fireproof evidence room.

The building will house the Pct. 2 Justice of the Peace and Constable's office.

Plans also call for the old building to be torn down and a new parking lot put in its place.

City works on street repairs, focuses on drainage project

Progress is defined as moving forward or onward in space or time. That is exactly what the City of East Bernard is doing — moving forward. In 2016, the city has seen much improvement on some much-needed projects. It has also showed us that we still have much to do for the next several years.

We began the year with streets getting a much needed fix. We were able to repair Reinhardt Avenue, San Bernard Drive and West Bernard Drive. Clubside Drive, Edgeview Drive, Cabinet Road and Foundation Loop are in the process of being repaired. More streets are on the books to be repaired as this is an ongoing task.

The City of East Bernard is really focusing on drainage. We were able to complete our drainage project on Urbanec and Wallace. Other drainage projects in the works include Clubside Drive, Edgeview Drive, John Albert Drive, and more. Drainage will continue to be an ongoing mission for the city.

The flood in April was devastating to our area. We know there is work to do on the San Bernard River, and we know we will need to keep pushing for that help. In the meantime, we have evaluated the areas affected in the city and are working on a plan to ensure better drainage for the residents.

We have been in contact with Centerpoint Energy to install several more streetlights throughout the city. They were evaluating the areas we have requested, and are creating a plan for installation. This has been a long process, and we are eager to see the end product. Please continue to be patient with us and with Centerpoint. The City of East Bernard has created a beautification initiative that has seen some success. This initiative strives to keep our town

**AUDREY
L. SCEARCE**

**EAST BERNARD
CITY SECRETARY**



in the best condition, safe, and inviting. We still have more to do, but we are on the right path.

The summer has been a great time in East Bernard. Our city pool has made some improvements and are keeping the youth well entertained. We have added several different events for families, senior citizens and our kids. More information on those events can always be found on the city website. We are hoping to add more events in the fall at the city park.

Our website is up and running. Information and upcoming events can be found at www.eastbernardtx.com. We have a community calendar on the website that is available for local organizations to use. If your group has an event coming up, fill out the form on the website to have it included in our calendar.

Progress has been made, but there is still much to be done. Please know that we are working hard for you and are committed to keeping East Bernard a good place to live. If you have any questions, comments, or ideas you would like to pass on to us, please contact us at 979-335-6558.

Audrey L. Scarce 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.



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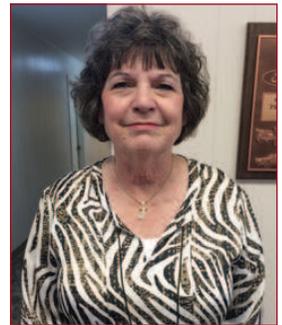


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Jeanne VonDerAu Received the Businessperson of the Year Award

The Wharton Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture honored Jeanne VonDerAu, Dealer Principal at Von-Wil Ford as Businessperson of the Year.



Working at Von-Wil Ford gives VonDerAu the opportunity to sponsor local organizations that are important to her, including the Crisis Center, the Chamber of Commerce, the antique car show, Wharton County Junior College and the Bright Minds scholarship fund. "This business affords me the ability to do good things for Wharton," said VonDerAu. "There's just a lot of wonderful things that we have in Wharton, and it's nice to be able to support them." VonDerAu is on the board of directors at the Crisis Center for Matagorda and Wharton County. "It's very important to me what we support and give graciously to the Crisis Center," said VonDerAu. She also started Mozell VonDerAu Memorial Scholarship Fund which is given to graduates in Wharton and surrounding counties.

VonDerAu is one of 36 female Ford dealers in Texas. Women make up around 4 percent of the total dealers in Texas. "It's a great honor," said VonDerAu on receiving Businessperson of the Year. "I didn't expect it, which makes it even better."

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