



The Facts

COVERING BRAZORIA COUNTY ★ WHERE TEXAS BEGAN

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Freedom Park upgrade wish list in the works

Larger baseball field among added amenities under consideration

By WES WOLFE
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ANGLETON — Significant improvements could be on the way for Freedom Park, depending on what makes it into the master plan discussed at a town

hall meeting presided over by the city parks and recreation board.

The purpose of a town hall Monday was to see what sort of amenities the public wants considered.

“We will be hiring a consulting firm after we designate what our park amenities will be,” Parks and Recreation Director Megan Mainer said. “In late fall, beginning of (the) new year, they’ll develop a plan for us and then we’ll look at developing that plan

in the future.”

The second planned town hall, set for Nov. 9, is to prioritize the amenities suggested. City staff will then hand those items off to the consulting firm selected and the firm will develop the master plan, the delivery of which is expected in May. Also, the county will begin working on pond development at the park sometime in summer 2021.

The city already advertised a request for qualifications, the

deadline for which is also Nov. 9.

There was a plan developed nearly two decades ago but not fully implemented that included six youth baseball fields, three volleyball courts, five historical exhibits, six horseshoe pits, a jogging trail, exercise stations, one large and four smaller pavilions, picnic tables, grills, one large and two small playground structures and the infrastructure to support

■ See **PARKS**, Page 4A

BISD officer takes on Brawner

By ALEXA CRENSHAW
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Police officer David Keith Rougeau is competing for incumbent James Brawner’s position of Precinct 4 Constable.

Brawner, 46, lives in Angleton. He has lived in Precinct 4 for about 11 years, he said, but he is a lifelong resident of Brazoria County. He grew up in Danbury prior to joining the U.S. Navy.

He and his wife, Holly, have a 14-year-old son, Gavin, and a 10-year-old daughter, Brooke.

Brawner was the Brazoria Chamber of Commerce

■ See **CONSTABLE**, 4A



ELECTION Q&A

CONSTABLE
PRECINCT 4

GOOD STUFF

Scarecrow contest a creative way to bring together families, school

By CORINNA RICHARDSON
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SWEENEY

When Darrin Batchelor was about 7 years old, he would pick the cotton on the ends of the rows where the picking machine would miss it at his great-grandfather’s farm in Damon.

“The farm is still there,” he said.

Darrin and Christi Batchelor’s daughter Ember is now 7 years old and picked cotton from the same farm to stuff a scarecrow.

“She picked it off the stalk,” Darrin said. “She loved it.”

The two of them picked dozens of pounds of cotton to stuff “Dandy Don,” the scarecrow the family created for Sweeny Christian School’s first scarecrow contest.

Usually, the school hosts an annual fall festival, but it was canceled this year because of COVID-19, trustee Glen Duncan said.

Administrator Lynette McKinney suggested another way to bring families together.

“Lynette had a good idea about having all the families that wanted to could make a scarecrow, and then we could exhibit them out here,” Duncan said.

The school caters to preschoolers through

■ See **SCARECROW**, 4A



JENNA KIESER/The Facts

First-graders Ryan Newsom, left, and Maverick Jones play with one of the scarecrows in front of Sweeny Christian School on Tuesday. Students and their families designed and made scarecrows for a competition held at the school.



JENNA KIESER/The Facts

First-grader Brylee Mitchell plays with a pom-pom hanging from a cheerleader-themed scarecrow at Sweeny Christian School on Tuesday.



JENNA KIESER/The Facts

Scarecrow entries sit in front of Sweeny Christian School on Tuesday.



CORINNA RICHARDSON/The Facts

Second-grader Ember Batchelor holds a photo of herself with her great-grandfather, Daddy Don, Tuesday morning outside Sweeny Christian School. Daddy Don was the inspiration for the family’s scarecrow.

Firefighter seeks seat vs. Clute incumbent

By NICK IRENE
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CLUTE — Two long-term community members are battling for votes to represent Ward Eon City Council.

Incumbent Frances Vaughn is campaigning against 30-year Clute firefighter Robert Akerstorm.

Originally from Sussex County, New Jersey, Akerstorm, 50, has called Clute his home with his wife Stacey and his son RJ for more than 35 years. He also serves as captain with the city’s volunteer fire department.

Akerstorm works as a heavy equipment operator and has experience with

■ See **CLUTE**, Page 7A



ELECTION Q&A

CLUTE CITY
COUNCIL
WARD E

Richwood council Position 1 race pits incumbent against first-timer



ELECTION Q&A

RICHWOOD
COUNCIL
POSITION 1

By WES WOLFE
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RICHWOOD — Two of the three Richwood City Council members up for reelection drew opponents, including Position 1, currently held by Mike Johnson who faces rotating equipment specialist David Rafalski.

Johnson, 55, is an eight-year resident of Richwood and a native of Oregon. He works as a maintenance engineer and he and his wife have two children.

He previously served on the Richwood Bond Board and he’s served as the chair of trustees for Chapelwood United Methodist Church in Lake Jackson.

Johnson doesn’t have a campaign website or any campaign social media accounts.

Rafalski, 44, moved to Richwood one year and nine



JOHNSON



RAFALSKI

months ago, and is originally from Brazoria and Lake Jackson. He’s a rotating equipment specialist who’s been married for 20 years, with four

children, two grandchildren and a third grandchild on the way.

He’s never sought public office before. Rafalski’s served as a volunteer and on the board of directors

for the Brazoria County Fair Association, the board of trustees for Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic School and as a volunteer and past president of the Brazoswood Youth Football Association.

Rafalski’s Facebook campaign page can be found at facebook.com/electrafalski.

Richwood City Council members serve two-year terms and are not paid.

Early voting is underway and ends Oct. 30. Election Day is Nov. 3.

Candidates were sent iden-

tical questionnaires. Their responses are presented in alphabetical order with minimal editing.

QUESTION

Richwood had faced an unbalanced budget for years. What should be done to improve the city’s financial shape?

JOHNSON: Balance the budget, don’t operate the utilities at a deficit, and maintain a fair contingency fund for

■ See **RICHWOOD**, 7A

EARLY VOTING
OCTOBER 13TH
THRU
OCTOBER 30TH
ELECTION NOV. 3RD

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