



The Insider

Breaking Ground

Valley Ranch Town Center: Houston Area's Largest Retail Development



From left to right: Steve Sheldon, Brady Wilkins, Isidor Ybarra, Commissioner Jim Clark, Brenda Webb, Martin Zepeda, Danny Signorelli, County Judge Craig Doyal, Rick Hatcher, former Commissioner Ed Rinehart, Frank McCrady, Leonard Rogers, David Weber, Shamar O'Bryant and Justice of the Peace James Metts.

With gold shovels in hand, the East Montgomery County Improvement District, developer The Signorelli Company, county officials and the Greater East Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce turned the dirt April 15 at the corner of U.S. Highway 59 and the Grand Parkway, signaling the beginning of construction on the highly anticipated Valley Ranch Town Center.

"This development with shopping and retail will rival anything from the Houston area. In fact, this development is the largest retail development in the entire greater Houston area," said Danny Signorelli.

The 240-acre development, anchored by a Kroger Marketplace and a large Sam's Club, includes about 1.8

million square feet of retail, dining and entertainment options. Additionally, the Town Center will be adorned with walking paths and park space.

The Town Center will also include an entertainment district which includes New Caney ISD's 8,500-seat Texan Drive Stadium (opened September 2014), plans for a 10,000-seat amphitheater and a regional movie theater, as well as other entertainment venues. Over 1,000 multi-family units are also planned.

"Signorelli's vision for the Town Center never wavered and will provide great opportunities for local residents to eat, shop and have a better quality of life for our community," said Frank McCrady, EMCID's President and CEO. "It took a team effort to make this all fit together

to bring this project to the community and provide job opportunities in the future."

"This changes everything," beamed Brenda Webb, Chairman of the Board. "This changes the entire landscape of East Montgomery County for the better."

continued on page 3

In This Issue

A Message from the President/CEO.....	2
Economy.....	3
Community.....	4
Education.....	6
Inside EMCID.....	7
Important Dates.....	Back cover

A Message from our President & CEO



*Frank McCrady
President/CEO*

Economies Tied Together

East Montgomery County has a distinct personality and character. It is our individualism and personal preferences that make up who we are and what our area will become in the future. Having three children educated in New Caney ISD provides me a unique perspective on the importance of our next generation and the impact they will have on the direction of our country. It's only natural that I would want to do my best for my children and yours to make sure they grow up in an area of opportunity with all the best life has to offer.

Our area continues to thrive. Population analysis and community input drives our Board's decisions and competing priorities for funds. Our Board strategically looks at opportunities in retail, commercial and industrial development and how they complement each other as we expand on our plan to grow East Montgomery County. Industrial and commercial development creates more job opportunities, which spurs demand for residential development, which in turn brings more shopping and dining experiences. It is a cycle of commerce that is present in many fast growth communities like ours.

In developing communities you only get one chance. What I mean by that is once a building is constructed on a site, it will not be torn down or repurposed for at least 15 years. So EMCID has to be proactive and not reactive in ensuring the highest and best use development opportunities come to our area. We can be complacent and just accept what comes or we can be aggressive and reach out for a better product we want in our community.

Aggressive marketing efforts by EMCID resulted in the new Kroger Center at Northpark and the Valley Ranch Town Center. Both developments had numerous opportunities to bring in businesses with less sound financial footing than what we are seeing being built today. Each developer held their ground for 5 - 10 years and interacted with EMCID to expand on a vision of what our community could be in the future. Our extensive efforts in working with each developer, addressing their increased carrying costs on the development and providing incentives allowed them the needed flexibility to build a more density-driven development with a town center environment. The most exciting aspect of Valley Ranch is that it will be a future gathering place for our residents with park space, recreational opportunities and walking trails.

In the Northpark area, we are now experiencing the benefits of our efforts as restaurants such as Smash Burger, Brewinz, Pollo Tropical, and Taco Cabana — previously not in our area — are open and thriving. Next up, will be new shopping experiences at Valley Ranch starting with Sam's Club.

We look forward to bringing you additional amenities as well; our Board is considering several sites for large and small splash pad parks.

We can't create a community that you want to live, work and play in unless we hear from you. EMCID has begun a program where we go out into the communities and ask for input of the things you would like to see in our area and how you would like to see our area develop. Please give Kelley Mattlage, Director of Communications, a call at (281)354-4419 if you would like for us to provide an update to your community.



Above, developer Danny Signorelli, former Commissioner Ed Rinehart and Frank McCrady pose for pictures at the groundbreaking of the Valley Ranch Town Center April 15.

Schedule of Community Meetings

June 4, 6:30 p.m. @ City of Patton Village, City Annex Building, 16940 Main St., Splendora, TX

June 15, 6:30 p.m. @ City of Splendora, City Hall, 26090 FM 2090 Rd., Splendora, TX

July 16, 6:30 p.m. @ Kings Manor HOA, Club House, 27200 Kings Manor Dr. South, Kingwood, TX

Please visit www.emctx.com for a complete and up-to-date schedule.

Economy

Craft Beer to Enter EMC Market

Take a look down Sorters McClellan Road near the Lone Star College - Kingwood campus and you'll find plenty of action. The Back Pew Brewing Company is renovating a former office building into a micro-brewery featuring beer lines for "saints" and "sinners."

The company, founded by native Houstonian Bobby Harl — who has a Ph.D. in chemical engineering and an M.B.A., has invested over \$600,000 on equipment and has a total investment of more than \$1.1 million into the project.

Harl crafted his "saints" beers to be "approachable" and appealing to a wider audience. "More flavor, more richness. It has a little more alcohol [than regular beer] but nothing



like switching over entirely," said Harl.

The "sinners" line will be the exact opposite. "Those are going to be our bigger, more intense craft beers. This is where we can get crazy and experiment with flavors."

continued on back cover

Pollo Tropical Offering Taste of the Caribbean

Pollo Tropical, a Caribbean-inspired restaurant, held its grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony Friday, May 8 at its newest Houston area location in the Village at Northpark.

EMCID will provide ¼ cent of annual taxable sales to Pollo Tropical over five years as long as at least 30 percent of the restaurant's employees reside within the District's borders.

The restaurant will feature the brand's signature flame-grilled marinated chicken and world-renown Create Your Own TropicChops®.

Breaking Ground continued from cover page



Above, EMCID directors Brenda Webb, Stephen Carlisle and Martin Zepeda attend the ribbon cutting ceremony for Taco Cabana.

EMCID has partnered with The Signorelli Company with a commitment to create an economic zone and capture these newly generated sales tax dollars to reinvest, assuring that the highest quality and maximum level of development can be achieved in Valley Ranch. With this success, EMCID will be able to expand its ability to influence jobs and make a positive impact on how the greater EMCID boundary develops out.

As part of the development agreement, the developer has agreed to donate up to \$2.5 million in revenues back to the East Montgomery County Scholarship Foundation, a non-profit subsidiary of EMCID, which provides scholarships to local high school graduates and college students.

The Town Center is expected to open in the first quarter of 2016.

Taco Cabana Open for Business

The Taco Cabana in the Village at Northpark opened to the public following the ribbon cutting held Thursday, April 23. Started as a taco stand in San Antonio in 1978, the company pioneered the concept of "patio cafés," which are semi-enclosed patio dining areas decorated in festive Mexican themes.

Keysteel Purchases Additional Six Acres at Industrial Park

Keysteel, which produces wire mesh and reinforcing bar, bought six acres of land adjacent to its current 80,000 square foot facility at the East Montgomery County Industrial Park. This will allow the company to double in size.

As part of an incentive agreement between EMCID and Keysteel, Keysteel will contribute \$100,000 over a 10 year period to the East Montgomery County Scholarship Foundation.

Community



Splash Pad Project Goals Set

The Board of Directors set priorities and looked at demographics in five areas of East Montgomery County at a special workshop held April 14 for a proposed splash pad project. Yael Coifman, with Leisure Development Partners, is conducting the feasibility study for EMCID. Coifman presented demographic information for areas of (north to south) Splendora, Roman Forest, Lake Houston, the Grand Parkway and Porter.

The Board's priorities include:

- Parks are free to the public.
- EMCID will not directly operate.
- First park location must be impactful.
 1. Attractive to large number of people.
 2. Benefits adjacent businesses.
- Second location (possibly third) fills a need where community amenities are lacking.

EMCID to Award Community Development Grant Funds in June

The Board of Directors considered applications for Community Development Grant funding at an April 30 special workshop from the following applicants. The Board will present checks to successful applicants at the *June 11 regular board meeting.

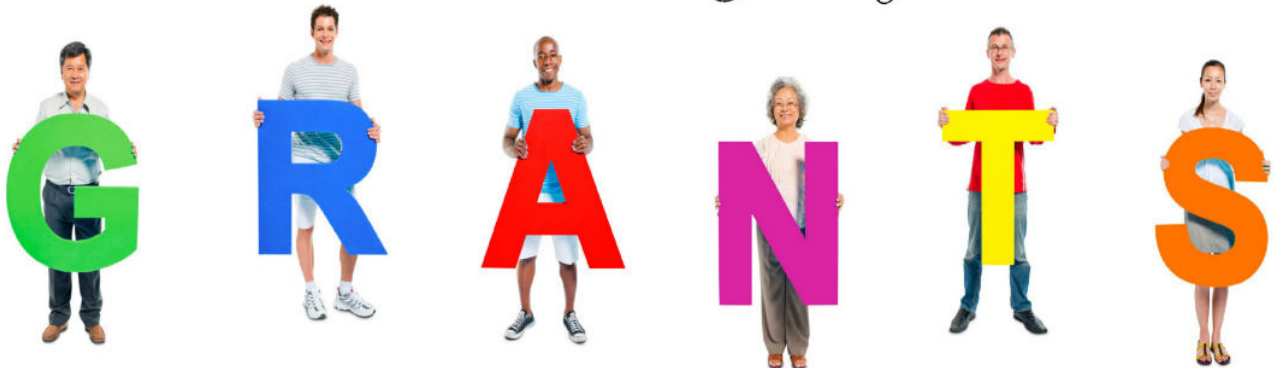
Applicants

City of Roman Forest
City of Roman Forest Police Department
East Montgomery County Historical Society
East Montgomery County YMCA of Greater Houston Area
Five-Star Regional Education Alliance c/o LSC-Kingwood
Heaven's Army of Resources

Mission Northeast
Montgomery County Youth Services
New Caney New Horizons, inc.
Porter Drug & Alcohol Screens
Splendora Junior High School - Science Club
Splendora Junior High School - AV Club
Splendora Youth Baseball Association

**Date subject to change*

The possibilities are endless in East Montgomery County.
Start Dreaming Today.



Community

Board Reduces Lone Star College Academy's Rent

The Board of Directors approved at its March 19 regular meeting a reduction in the rent charged to the Lone Star College Academy for Lifelong Learning (LSC - EMCID) for its space at the EMCID complex. The \$48,000 per year rental costs attributed to nearly half of the Academy's \$100,000 financial deficit last year. The amendment to the lease agreement reduces the rent from \$4,000 per month to \$1,500 per month. The Board based its decision after unanimous agreement that the college provides a great benefit to the community by offering educational programs to the area's seniors at little to no cost.

The Academy offers courses in technology, health and wellness, financial planning, community service projects, literary discussion groups, genealogy, arts and crafts, an insider's view of Texas history, and more.

.....



EMCID Helps With Bluebonnet Girls State Program

EMCID's Board of Directors was pleased to help the American Legion Auxiliary send three girls from East Montgomery County to this summer's Bluebonnet Girls State, a leadership program that educates girls from across Texas about the duties, privileges, rights and responsibilities of American citizenship and democracy. The program will be held June 14 to June 20 at Texas Lutheran University in Seguin. The \$250 check was presented at the March 19 meeting.

.....



Continued Support of Fire Service

EMCID's Board of Directors presented a check for \$170,130.44 to Porter Fire Department Chief Carter Johnson (ESD #6) at the March 19 board meeting. The funds are part of EMCID's continued support of ESD #6 and expanded fire protection for residents.

Spring Extravaganza a Hopping Good Time

EMCID's annual spring festival was held March 26 at the EMCID Complex.



Want to earn **MONEY** and help
your community?
Apply for the
EMCID/EMCSF Work Study Program
and earn **\$750!**

Areas of Work:
Business/Office Administration
Communications
Special Events

Open to seniors at New Caney, Porter and
Splendora high schools.

Paid Internship Program Created

EMCID and the East Montgomery County Scholarship Foundation (EMCSF), a non-profit subsidiary of EMCID, will offer a work study program for high school students this fall. The 10-week program is available to three students — one each from New Caney, Porter and Splendora high schools — who are interested in learning how the economic, community and educational development programs offered through EMCID impact the community and would like to advance their knowledge and skills in business, communications or event planning. Upon successful completion of the program, the student will earn \$750.

Criteria:

- Completed application (available online and in the office beginning July 1).
- Must have passed the 11th grade but not graduated prior to September 1, 2015.
- Previous knowledge of and desire to advance skills in business, communications or event planning.
- Must have reliable transportation.

The deadline to apply is August 1. Please apply at www.emctx.com/scholarships.

Merit Scholarship Winners Announced

The East Montgomery County Scholarship Foundation is pleased to announce six college students from East Montgomery County were chosen to receive its first \$500 merit scholarship. The scholarship is awarded to students who have at least 48 college credits and have demonstrated academic excellence, leadership and service, and financial need. Students must also have received previous scholarship funding from the Foundation. Applications are available online at www.emctx.com/scholarships and may be submitted between February 1 and March 1 each year.

Winners:

Rachel Gonzales, New Caney High School Class of 2013

Texas A&M University - pursuing BBA in Accounting

Meagan Silva Hartwick, New Caney High School Class of 2010

Lamar University - pursuing MS in Speech Language Pathology

Phillip McCrady, Porter High School Class of 2012

University of Arkansas - pursuing BS in International Business/Economics

Brent Neal, Splendora High School Class of 2012

Stephen F. Austin State University - pursuing BS in Forest Wildlife Management

Nia Ramirez, Splendora High School Class of 2012

Sam Houston State University - pursuing BA in Sociology

Shannon Seelye, New Caney High School Class of 2012

Texas A&M University - pursuing BS in Agricultural Leadership & Development

"Thank you for selecting
me as a recipient of the
East Montgomery County
Scholarship Foundation
Merit Scholarship!
As indicated in my
application, the availability
of scholarships for graduate
students is considerably
smaller than those available
to undergraduates,
so I am especially honored
and excited to receive
this funding."

Meagan Hartwick

Inside the East Montgomery County Improvement District

Parmer to Retire in June After More Than 17 Years as EMCID's Office Administrator

The year was 1998. East Montgomery County was as rural as can be. There was no 8-lane interstate, and there certainly weren't many dining or shopping options.

"There were a lot of woods and not much else," said Suzanne Parmer. 1998 was also the year Parmer went to work for the newly created East Montgomery County Improvement District.

"We had to start from scratch — for everything." EMCID was housed in four rooms on the second floor of the Wells Fargo drive-thru bank building on Community Drive.

Parmer, who had general office and accounting experience, says she knew nothing about economic development, but she learned on the fly and hit the ground running. She says she learned to keep her eyes and ears open and gleaned information from others while learning the process.

EMCID's focus and the landscape of East County began to change when Walmart Distribution negotiated to buy some land from EMCID off of Gene Campbell Road. She says that's where the idea began to start an industrial park. The East Montgomery County Industrial Park is now home to about a dozen companies and continues to attract companies from across the country.

Parmer helped to develop the Community Development Grant program and helped to establish the East Montgomery County Scholarship Foundation.

She's worked with numerous board members, two presidents with very different business styles and worked periods when there was no one at the helm of EMCID.

Parmer has enjoyed the good times and persevered through the bad; she says it's the variety that has kept the job interesting all these years.

"I've enjoyed the work. I've met a lot of people. I've learned a lot." She says it's mind boggling to think of all the changes that have taken place. "The conveniences are nice, but we still have a long way to go. It [business] will come."

She'll be there to watch it happen but from the background — where she says she's most comfortable. As she looks forward to retirement, her options are wide open.

"I won't sit idle," she says. She'd love to travel and volunteer at her church, but most importantly, she says, she wants to do things that make her happy and enjoy her family.



*Congratulations on your retirement,
Suzanne!*



Martin to Bring Experience, New Ideas to East Montgomery County

With 18 successful years experience in economic development and accounting, Tara Martin plans to inject her knowledge and passion to help East Montgomery County

develop into a thriving community.

Martin takes over as Office Administrator from Suzanne Parmer who is retiring this month. Tara began working at EMCID in February to become acquainted with the area, learn about various office procedures, and assess current development programs during the transition phase.

As Portfolio and Accounting Manager at the

Tulsa Economic Development Corporation, which provides loans for small businesses, Martin helped grow the non-profit organization's portfolio from \$200,000 to \$50 million over a 15 year period. She was also responsible for grant compliance reporting for the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, the U.S. Economic Development Administration, Community Development Block Grant and Small Business Incubator program, and she oversaw the lending program through the U.S. Small Business Administration.

"There's a lot of room for big industry in East Montgomery County, but we can't forget about building up the loan programs to assist the small businesses," said Martin. "That's what I hope to throw into the mix of all the great things that the East Montgomery County Improvement District does for the economy and community here."

Martin is looking forward to getting to know the community better. Texas is the tenth state the native from Iowa has called home. "I've lived in a lot of interesting places, but I can't wait to experience all that the greater Houston area has to offer!"



PRST STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM Retail



emctx.com
facebook.com/EMCID
twitter.com/EMCIDTX

East Montgomery County Improvement District 21575 U.S. Highway 59, Ste. 200, New Caney, TX 77357 281.354.4419

Craft Beer continued from page 3

The company will start off with two beers per line, self-distributing to local bars and restaurants, and will eventually expand the line and their distribution.

Harl said he plans to market the space to encourage visitors to stop by and taste test their latest recipes and bring in some outdoor dining options so that people can make a Saturday afternoon of it.

"We've got 14 acres here, so we have a lot of room to really make something out of this space," he said.

But the start-up company is a long way off from beer gardens and visitors. They've still got to clean up the main warehouse and do the dirty work before popping a top.

The micro-brewery is expected to open sometime this fall.

EMCID has agreed to provide incentive funding of \$15,000 to the company provided that by October 2017 the company has hired three employees who reside within the District boundaries.

In return, Back Pew Brewing Company has agreed to donate \$1,000 each year for five years to the East Montgomery County Scholarship Foundation.

Important Dates

June - August 2015

June 4	Community Meeting
June 6	GEMC Chamber Sawmill Festival
*June 11	EMCSF Meeting EMCEDC Meeting EMCID Regular Meeting
June 14	Flag Day
June 15	Community Meeting
June 21	Father's Day
June 30	Free Immunizations Clinic
July 3	Observance of Independence Day/EMCID Closed
July 4	Independence Day
*July 9	EMCID Regular Meeting
July 16	Community Meeting
*August 13	EMCID Regular Meeting
August 24	First Day of School
August 29	Free Immunizations Clinic

**Dates subject to change*