



# The Insider



## Big Rivers, Big Fun

Photo courtesy: Grand Texas.

# A Call to the Community



Those of us who are Baby Boomers and Gen X-ers grew up with a lot of unknowns in the world, but with Google and other online resources today, there are not as many as there used to be. Elvis, D.B Cooper, Bigfoot, JFK, Who Shot J.R.? and even the Loch Ness monster — all explained with the click of a button. Millennials have almost always had this magic at their fingertips, but something we all have in common is dealing with our individual unknowns every day.

Pushing past our personal unknowns is important in demonstrating that we cannot accept mediocrity; it is delving into the unknown and pushing ourselves for something better. Pushing ourselves brings out the characteristics of innovation and creativity. Interestingly enough, when talking to companies in other countries, these are the characteristics Americans are most admired for. International business brings challenges, but America is still viewed as the land of opportunity for expansion and continued business development.

The current presidential administration's position on tariffs and protectionist policies is providing an environment of unknowns for businesses across the world. Continuing to only operate outside of America while trying to expand operations may not be cost beneficial, which prompts international businesses to accelerate development in the U.S. and build new facilities in our area. Doing so reduces the risk of tariffs by now being U.S. based and in some aspects, unknowns are good.

Our organization, EMCID, deals with unknowns as well. East Montgomery County has never received any grant funding from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA), although the EDA has placed several million dollars in other communities across the state. So in dealing with an unknown, we met with the EDA, and we are happy to say that we are in the final stages of receiving \$1.5 million dollars in federal funds which we will match with \$375,000 in local funds to construct an industrial office/warehouse building. This facility will be available for businesses to lease and create additional jobs in a designated opportunity zone at the industrial park. Bringing federal dollars to EMC for economic development has never been done before. That clearly was an unknown.

Several years ago when looking into efforts to provide alternative energy and reduce the demand for oil and gas, we began looking at the wind and solar industry, somewhat of an unknown industry for recruiting purposes. Today, we

have YMER Technology, a leader in wind energy technology from Sweden, that located their U.S. headquarters in New Caney, renting 65,000 sq. ft. at our industrial park; they're quickly on their way to creating approximately 40 positions — 17 of those positions already exist.

Grand Texas' Big Rivers Waterpark opened in May. Travel and tourism, or recreation-based industry are new to East Montgomery County. Diversifying our economy with this type of activity and revenue stream insulates us from economic downturns in industries such as oil and gas or medical, which have had ups and downs over the past few years.

Our EMC Scholarship Foundation board increased scholarship funds available to high school graduates from \$1,000 per student to \$1,600 per student in 2018. Again, an unknown action of whether it would truly be utilized by our students. I am happy to report more students than ever are using those scholarships for not only college courses but also for trade schools and other educational opportunities, such as certificates and licenses.

We have many students who have just graduated and will be embarking on a new unknown environment and life-changing event. Yep, it's called life beyond high school. Please challenge your kids to pursue the difficult path of post-secondary education. Challenge them to rise up to meet those demands and be that support system when they are faced with difficult times. Be their cheerleader. Positive reinforcement is infectious!



*Frank McCrady  
President & CEO*

My point to all this is simple: it is easy to remain in one's comfort zone and continue to allow activities and growth around you and be complacent. I would like to challenge you to do something that makes you uncomfortable because it's unknown to you. Don't be afraid of failure. Failure is the greatest builder of character. It is not the failure that defines who we are, but the way we learn from our failure and applying those lessons to our next decision is what helps us make a better-educated decision the next time.

# J&R's Ace Hardware Celebrates Grand Opening

It's been a long time coming, but East Montgomery County finally has an Ace Hardware. EMCID welcomed the newest retail addition in Porter with a ribbon cutting ceremony for owner Jeff Petersen and J&R's Ace Hardware in June.

The store, located at 23678 FM 1314, opened its doors in March, but officially celebrated June 7-9 with grand opening weekend specials as well as grilling and equipment demonstrations.

"We're thrilled to finally have an Ace Hardware in our community," said Frank McCrady, EMCID President & CEO. "Jeff Petersen has a great store with unmatched customer service."

Petersen has lived in the area and worked in retail for the past 18 years, wanting to open his own store in the area he grew up in to provide unmatched products and services.

J&R's carries items traditionally found in hardware stores such as paint, tools, and equipment but also features more unique items such as grills, fishing equipment, gift items, a garden center and even toys and treats for pets.

The shop even provides engine repairs on Stihl equipment, generators and water heaters; the owners have worked to make J&R's Ace Hardware a one-stop shop for the community.

Toward the front of the store, customers can find a gift shop, Canterbury Lane Gifts, featuring jewelry, handbags,



artisan dips, and marinades and dishes and glassware from designers such as Mudpie, Spartina, and Simply Southern T-shirts, among others.

Petersen is looking forward to welcoming everyone to the store.

"We encourage our community to check us out and see everything that we have to offer. We can't wait to meet everyone who visits our store," said Petersen.

## New Business Openings in EMC



A variety of different businesses have recently decided to call the EMC community home. The following businesses have either opened or will open this year:

- Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers, April
- Regions Bank, April
- Valvoline Quick Oil Change, May
- Olive Garden, May
- Big Rivers Water Park, May
- Wienerschnitzel, May
- Yummy Tummy Pastries, June
- Mathnasium, June
- My EyeLab, June
- Sub Zero Nitrogen Ice Cream, July
- Kung Fu Tea, August
- DaVita Dialysis, September

*\*Dates are accurate prior to printing of publication. Dates may change.*

# Wienerschnitzel Receives Warm Welcome



Cars lined up around the corner and guests filled the restaurant as one of the most anticipated restaurants, Wienerschnitzel, officially opened its doors in New Caney on Memorial Day weekend.

This newest location is the first of many set to open in the Houston market. The closest location is in Beaumont.

Specializing in hot dogs, Wienerschnitzel also prides themselves in serving burgers fresh off the grill, corn dogs, cheese fries and of course, its world-famous chili they use to coat most of the menu items. The secret as to what makes their chili so popular is a closely guarded secret.

“As a Houston resident, I consider it an honor to be able to open the first two Wienerschnitzel restaurants in Houston – and to bring Wienerschnitzel’s craveable menu to a part of Texas that takes its food seriously,” said investor Zaheed Umatiya.

Wienerschnitzel is a family-owned company, founded in 1961 by John Galardi with a single location in Southern California, Wienerschnitzel has grown to be the world’s largest hot dog chain serving more than 120 million hot dogs a year.

The New Caney restaurant is located at 20172 U.S. Highway 59 in front of the Walmart.



# Big Rivers Waterpark Opens



*Photos courtesy of Grand Texas.*



According to Grand Texas representatives, approximately 6,000 people arrived during the Memorial Day weekend to celebrate the official opening of the Big Rivers Waterpark.

Guests had the chance to enjoy several attractions such as Wild Isle, Boca Chica Bay Wave Pool, Rio Grand Lazy River and Big Al’s Fishing Hole. Additionally, the Gator Bayou Adventure Park attractions like the Big Rock Mining, Eagle Challenge, the zip lines and Eagle Challenge were open for guests.

More attractions for younger guests like the Polliwog Puddle, Hatching Hill and Gator Splash attractions along with the multi-rider and body waterslides were expected to open during June.

They also have live music on the weekends and a host of special events and discounted days for guests during the hot summer months.

# Olive Garden Spices up EMC Dining Scene

Excited customers lined up outside the newest Olive Garden location in Valley Ranch Town Center on May 20, patiently waiting for the doors to open.

The first customers cheered and clapped as they were promptly led to their tables to enjoy a fresh salad, warm breadsticks and pasta.

The new location in New Caney is a new concept that Olive Garden will carry on to the other locations they open in the future across the country.



# Paco Pops Becomes Popular Porter Stop



Porter's newest dessert shop, Paco Pops, features everything from strawberries and kiwis to Fruity Pebbles cereal, mango and chocolate made into frozen popsicles. They are located at 24022 Loop 494, Suite C in Porter, by Ford Road.

Francisco Sanchez, also known as Paco, grew up in Mexico and worked for many years in his aunt's business making fruit- and cream-based popsicles and ice cream from scratch. He started the local business with a partner who is a disabled veteran who served during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Paco developed a passion for the ice cream and popsicle business, enjoying crafting new popsicles and ice cream flavors. In addition to popsicles, Paco Pops also features other treats like nachos, elotes (corn in a cup,) fresh fruit drinks and many other snacks such as nachos in a bag filled with elotes, mangoneadas and hot Cheetos with cheese.

"We are both proud of what we have created and look forward to work on growing our business," said Paco.

# Kolache Factory To Open on Northpark Dr.

Situated along Northpark Drive and across the street from the entrance into the Kings Mill subdivision, The Kolache Factory will open a new location in the shopping center constructed and completed a few months ago.

Officially announced by JLL Realty, the shop features traditional kolaches as well as sausage, chorizo, spinach, bbq and anything else that can be imagined, stuffed in dough. The shop also caters and ships.

They have not released a completion or an opening date just yet, but the announcement that they were expected to come to EMC was met with excitement from the community.

The store will be located at 1395 Northpark Drive next to Showcase Carpets & Floors.



# Kelsey-Seybold's New Building Goes Vertical

Passersby along U.S. Highway 59 may have noticed a new addition to the landscape as the new, three-story building the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic will call home has gone vertical.

Expected to be open by January, the new clinic will increase in size to nearly 55,000 square-feet, and patients will have access to an expanded capacity in primary care, including internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics, and obstetrics/gynecology.

Additionally, the new Kelsey-Seybold clinic may add new specialties, such as pulmonary, cardiology, physical medicine and rehabilitation/spine, and optometry to an already robust list of specialties that includes allergy, endocrinology, gastroenterology, orthopedics – sports medicine and podiatry.

The new clinic will be located at 25553 U.S. Highway 59 in Porter.



# Scholarships Available for Recent Grads



After the caps have been thrown in the air and the celebrations concluded, it's time for freshly graduated seniors to choose their next path in life.

The East Montgomery County Scholarship Foundation, a nonprofit subsidiary of EMCID, strives to offer financial assistance for all New Caney and Splendora ISD graduates as well as for private school and homeschool graduates to make that next step. Students who graduated in the class of 2018 and 2019 are eligible for the scholarship.

All graduates within the boundaries of EMCID are encouraged to apply for a \$1,600 scholarship that can be used at the school of their choice. Additionally, the foundation offers a \$500 merit-based scholarship for college students and paid internship opportunities for high school seniors.

For more information, call 281-354-4419 or visit <http://www.emctx.com/scholarships/applications>.

# Shred It EMC Successful for Another Year



6 This year, more than 10,000 pounds of shredded paper was collected during the annual Shred It EMC in May.

# Heartworm Foundation Grant Helps EMC Pet Owners

This past spring, The Heartworm Foundation was able to disseminate 50 vouchers to EMC residents in just 50 minutes thanks to receiving grant funding awarded in the fall of 2018.

The Heartworm Foundation partnered with the Lone Star Animal Welfare League to hand out the vouchers and connected with the Big Thicket Veterinary Clinic in New Caney to provide the heartworm treatment for the animal.

During the grant process, The Heartworm Foundation representatives stated that a majority of heartworm-positive dogs sheltered at the Montgomery County Animal Shelter are from the New Caney area, thus instilling the importance of a program like this in EMC.



# Community Development Grants Awarded

The EMCID Board of Directors approved the following grants during the 2019 spring grant submission timeline:

American Legion Holbrook Post 615 – \$5,000; Grant money will fund the attendance of 15 boys to the Texas Boys State 2019 program.

East Montgomery County Fair Association, BBQ Pit-building Scholarship Committee – \$5,000; The grant will fund materials needed for New Caney, Porter and Splendora high school Ag Mechanics classes to compete in the BBQ pit building competition.

Humble Area Assistance Ministries – \$26,733; The grant will help assist 36 families in East Montgomery County with housing, utilities and food. The money will also cover some of the costs of 10 food fairs, and books, supplies, transportation and uniforms for those enrolled in HAAM's education program.

Knights of Columbus Council 13166 – \$4,000; The grant will assist the organization in making repairs to the refrigerator/freezer at the organization's food pantry, which is located at St. John of the Cross in New Caney. Funds will also help repair the food pantry's delivery truck and security cameras.

Lone Star Animal Welfare League – \$5,000; The grant will pay for 70 dogs in East Montgomery County through a voucher program to be spayed or neutered and receive vaccinations if needed.

Northeast Hospital Foundation – \$5,000; Through coordination with Project Mammogram, the grant will pay for 33 mammograms and other related services to patients in East Montgomery County who otherwise couldn't afford them.

Roman Forest Police Department – \$24,336; Grant money will fund the purchase of six patrol unit cameras.

Society of Saint Stephen – \$10,000; The grant will provide funds to assist the organization in purchasing new school supplies, backpacks and shoe vouchers for 1,000 children in New Caney and Splendora ISDs.

Splendora Athletic Booster Club – \$5,000; The grant will help purchase new coolers for the concession stands at sporting events.

A festive banner for an ice skating rink. The background is dark green with white and red decorative elements. On the left, there are two red ice skates on ice. In the center, a white ribbon banner reads "A HOLIDAY TO REMEMBER". To the right of the banner, there are two small photographs of people ice skating. The main text on the right says "COME PARTY WITH US!" in large, white, serif font. Below that, it says "Have your birthday, holiday party or family get together in the Private Room at the ice skating rink!" in white, sans-serif font. At the bottom right, it says "DECEMBER 21 - JANUARY 5" in large, yellow, sans-serif font. At the bottom left, it says "Reserve Your Spot Today. Details at [www.emctx.com/holidaytoremember2019](http://www.emctx.com/holidaytoremember2019)" in white, sans-serif font. A pine cone is on the bottom right.



\*\*\*\*\*ECRWSS\*\*\*\*

Local  
Postal Customer

PRST STD  
ECRWSS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
EDDM Retail

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

## Important Dates

July - August 2019

Independence Day (EMCID Complex Closed)	July 4		
Greater EMC Chamber Luncheon	July 10	11:30 a.m.	EMCID Complex Atrium
EMCID Regular Board Meeting	July 11*	5:30 p.m.	EMCID Complex, Suite 103
Free Children's Immunizations	July 17	9:30 a.m.	EMCID Complex Atrium
Greater EMC Chamber Luncheon	August 7	11:30 a.m.	EMCID Complex Atrium
EMCID Regular Board Meeting	August 8*	5:30 p.m.	EMCID Complex, Suite 103

*\*Dates subject to change*

Please visit [www.emctx.com/calendar](http://www.emctx.com/calendar) for an up-to-date listing of events.

The Insider is a bi-monthly newsletter produced by the East Montgomery County Improvement District. Please direct questions or comments to: Kelley Mattlage, Chief Communications Officer, [kmattlage@emctx.com](mailto:kmattlage@emctx.com).