

**East Montgomery County,
Let's take back
2020!**





We live in a consumer society, and like it or not, that is what drives our local economy. Telling a Texan they must stay home is a difficult message for any elected official, and as Texans, we pride ourselves on our freedoms and less government interaction in our lives. For those of you who shopped and continue to shop locally: thank you for supporting our local businesses and providing a means for them to continue the employment of their workers as much as they could.

This pandemic has changed the way we view ourselves, others around us, and the world. The following are some observations that can make us more competitive in the future as many things will change moving forward.

With more people at home, many have relied on Apple, Netflix, Amazon movies, and other forms of entertainment to pass the time. This has created a pattern that may continue even after movie theaters are fully open and not as many individuals return to the theaters. If so, the movie and theater industry could be damaged and take years to recover financially.

In the world of commercial real estate, the normal 10-year commercial lease single-use building will no longer be a standard. Mini seasonal retailers have been marketing outside of the big box concept, and in the future, more specialty markets and pop-up retail opportunities will develop in flexible spaces with no long-term leases. One new concept gaining ground is profit-sharing leases. They will become increasingly an important tool to help new businesses get started, survive slow-downs, and provide a return to landlords who invest in their tenants' success.

Rental office space needs will reduce substantially as more employers discover workers can perform their functions at home or in a shared workspace environment.

Real estate trends will change simply due to the fact when large employers such as United, as an example, and others must strategically reposition their employees to remain competitive in the market.

Web-based meetings for internal office and external business interaction will become more prevalent in the world.

Computer access and Wi-Fi accessibility will continue to be a challenge for our educational institutions in areas where this infrastructure is not present, making it difficult for students to complete coursework and interact with fellow students and teachers.

2 Younger individuals and those with less education will be

most vulnerable to further losing employment in food service or cashiers as those functions become more automated.

This pandemic has demonstrated the importance of the trucking industry and logistics planning efficiency to remain competitive.

New ideas in law enforcement technology and pandemic safety for our law enforcement and first responders is an area that will continue to evolve.

Psychological and social counseling needs increase dramatically during a time such as this, since changing the environment of individuals can negatively impact their well-being and require more counseling.

We have seen driving patterns change and reduced mileage in commuting as well as business travel.

State parks and locally-managed recreational facilities and parks will continue to see an increase in attendance. Demand for this type of travel will continue to increase as longer travel options will be slow to return.

Businesses will most likely implement an enhanced hygiene program for their employees in the workplace to ensure a safe workspace.

Do you see plexiglass every time you go to the store? This has increased tremendously with retail or social interactions including a plexiglass barrier-induced environment.

Non-touch banking transactions and non-touch credit card transactions will continue to be implemented.

We have experienced numerous projects and businesses that want to locate to our area and who have had the time away from the office to strategically think about their next move. I want to encourage you to do the same and think through how you want to strategically position your business for the future.



*Frank McCrady
President & CEO*

OPEN Loans Available for Local Businesses

As businesses still feel the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, EMCID and its nonprofit subsidiary, the East Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (EMCEDC), continue to find ways to support them with the OPEN Loan Program.

Standing for Offering emPloyers (help with) Essential Needs (OPEN,) the program allows businesses to have access to capital within two weeks of applying, thus providing funds for continued employment or re-employment of staff and additional cashflow needs during this difficult time.

EMCID approved for \$900,000 to be made available to small businesses within the District boundaries impacted by mandatory closures and reduced business in response to slow the spread of COVID-19.

The OPEN Loan program provides three types of assistance to struggling local companies.

- Up to \$20,000 loan at 2% interest with a term of up to 10 years.
- Loan guarantees up to \$20,000.
- Interest rate buy-down.

The intent is to give businesses the opportunity to continue paying its employees while revenue is down, to pay its bills until government-issued mandatory closures or restrictions are lifted, or keep the business open until federal assistance kicks in.

One of the businesses to apply and be approved for the OPEN program – Fat Boys Restaurant – used the funds to create more seating for customers.

“I saw the East Montgomery County Improvement District was offering loans to local businesses through their Economic Development Corporation,” Fat Boys Restaurant owner Lisa Gold said in an interview with The Observer Newspapers.

She followed the link to see how the process worked and how soon funds would be available. To her surprise, it was as smooth as silk, she said.

“I filled out the form, uploaded it and waited,” Gold said. “I received a call from (President/CEO) Frank McCrady that they had approved my loan and days later I signed the paperwork and the money was available so quick.”

The EMCEDC approves the loans for businesses that apply for the OPEN loan program.

Porter Teen Gives Back Through Cookies

Baking cookies and cakes have always been a passion for 13-year-old Arianna Bustillo, inspiring her to launch her business, Sweet Little Cookie by Arianna in 2019.

The Porter teen first learned how to bake cookies by watching YouTube videos and then experimenting in her kitchen.

Through her sweet creations, Arianna has helped her fellow residents celebrate birthdays, graduations and now, honor those frontline workers in the healthcare industry.

Arianna recently had the chance to put a few smiles on healthcare workers' faces by creating special cookies to show her appreciation of their hard work.

She also created one-of-a-kind cookies for recent graduates complete with face masks — indicative of the times many have faced since the COVID-19 pandemic started.

In the future, Arianna hopes to open her bakery and continue putting smiles on customers' faces.



ArmTact Munitions Opens in Porter

Since he began providing training and duty ammunition to local police departments and constable's offices, Eric Cowdrey, the owner of ArmTact Munitions, knew opening a location in East Montgomery County would be the most beneficial for his business.

Eric enlisted the help of the East Montgomery County Improvement District to find the perfect location in EMC to build a manufacturing warehouse, settling on a property in Porter, and launching their production in March 2020.

"Frank McCrady, President/CEO of EMCID, was a wealth of knowledge and was able to get us moved into a warehouse with some help of a grant and great people in EMC," said Eric.

"Also, we have had a great relationship with the local police chiefs. I was approached about the need for our products in the area and I felt that EMC would be the perfect place to start new and grow, hiring local talent and supplying the needs of the departments," added Eric.

ArmTact Munitions is a Veteran-Owned Type 10 Ammunition Manufacturer that prides itself on quality and precise micro-manufacturing which means they care more about the end-product than the amount they could make per day.



According to Eric, they have set a goal to be at full production by the middle of summer this year, expanding the ammo to all of EMC and surrounding counties. Currently, ArmTact is a manufacturing facility, but they hope to have a storefront open to the public in the future.

"This will put us in a place to hire local talent and grow into large contracts," said Eric. "We are excited to be in Porter and East Montgomery County. We are also excited to provide superior ammo to our local law enforcement as well as EMC and surrounding counties' residents. I would like to thank the chiefs and EMCID for helping a Veteran-Owned small business feel welcomed and supported. We can't wait to see our business succeed in EMC."

Keysteel Wire Expands in New Caney

Opening a factory location in New Caney to produce steel wire and mesh wire near customers was the main reason why Keysteel Wire chose to open in the East Montgomery County Industrial Park.

With the assistance of the East Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation, a subsidiary of EMCID, they were able to secure electricity and water through negotiations with governmental entities, receive aid that helped to promote improvements to the facility and receive support for recruitment through publications and job fairs.

"The incentive plan that was available and the option to build our facility in the EMC Industrial Park gave us the perfect solution to what we were looking for," said Pablo Ramirez with Keysteel. "Being surrounded by FM 1314 and FM 1485, close to U.S. Hwy. 59 and now the Grand Parkway and its imminent expansion, it provides a great benefit to our operation. EMCID has been supportive throughout the process. They are always interested in our projects and plans and eager to provide with any help we may have needed."

The company first started operations back in 1988 in Monterrey, Mexico under the name of Aceros y Laminados Leal. In the 1990s, the company started exporting to the United States. After some time and once the volume

increased, the company included in the expansion plan to have a facility in the U.S., choosing to open in New Caney.

Keysteel Wire manufactures steel wire products such as standard steel wire mesh for concrete reinforcement, engineered structural mesh and drawn wire in both continuous or straightened and cut bundles.

"Our location is prime for our customers and employees. With Texas as the main destination of our exported products, we included the metropolitan area of Houston in the location selection process," said Ramirez. "New Caney along with San Antonio, Beaumont, Baton Rouge and New Orleans were the options we all looked at. Among the main variables considered for the selection was the location of customers and potential suppliers, labor availability and all the logistics items related to our business. New Caney was the perfect location."

In the future, Keysteel wants to expand the factory to house new machinery that can produce larger sheets of steel to use for bigger projects such as road construction. Currently, their products are used for floors and sidewalks, so the expansion will help Keysteel compete on a larger scale with other businesses.

Electronics Recycling to be held on Sept. 12

EMCID will host an Electronics Recycling Event Saturday, Sept. 12 at the EMCID parking lot from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. With the help of CompuCycle, most electronics are accepted and will be recycled at no cost.

Accepted items: Computers, laptops, monitors, hard drives, cables and cords, desktop printers, cell phones, TVs (LCD, LED and plasma) up to 50", CRT TVs up to 27", cable TV boxes, stereo amplifiers and iPads/tablets.

Acceptable items must be removed from packaging materials.

For questions concerning acceptable and unacceptable items, call CompuCycle at 713-869-6700.



Hundreds Turn out for Shred It EMC

Cars were lined up around the EMCID building for the annual Shred It EMC in May.

With such a great response, the volunteers filled two shred trucks with more than 15,000 pounds of shredded paper that will be recycled and additional papers were stored at the EMCID building and picked up a few days later after the trucks' capacity reached the maximum.

Members of the Splendora ISD Athletics program volunteered at this year's Shred It EMC to help collect the recyclable paper items from people's cars to be placed in the shredder.



THE OFFICIAL MAP

EAST TEXAS FIRE AND ICE FESTIVAL 2020



AT BIG RIVERS WATERPARK & ADVENTURES

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29TH

23101 TX-242, NEW CANEY, TX 77357

20

THE FREE STUFF

Admission and Parking
Snow Slides
KidZone
Petting Zoo and Pony rides
Wild Isle and Giant Maze
All Performances
All Water Attractions

FAQS

Q. Can I bring in outside food and drinks?

A. No, outside food and drinks, coolers or glass containers may not be brought into the park. However, guests may bring personal food into the park if it is medically necessary (e.g., for diabetics, baby formula for infants, gluten-free foods, or allergy-safe foods for allergies).

Q. Can I purchase alcohol inside the park?

A. Yes, alcohol may be purchased at the Ice House. Please bring a valid ID.

Q. Is there a place to store my belongings?

A. Yes, lockers are available for rent for the day (\$10, \$12, and \$15).

Q. What amenities are at the park?

A. Shaded areas with picnic tables, chairs and lounge chair seating or you may bring lawn chairs and sit under the trees near the Ice House. The park also has several restroom facilities.

Q. Where do we park?

A. Please go to Gate 2 for general parking.

Q. Do I need anything before attending the event?

A. To expedite your access to attractions, Big Rivers Waterpark requires minors under 18 to have a signed waiver filled out by a parent or guardian if they participate in any of the aerial attractions or Wild Isle. You can do that ahead of time at www.emctx.com/fi2020 or fill it out at the park.

THE PAID STUFF

Food and Drinks

All Aerial Attractions (Must reserve online prior to event)

Bait and Gems

Axe Throwing and Archery

REQ'D ATTIRE

Closed-toe shoes are required on the zip lines, ropes courses and the climbing wall.

Bare feet are required on Wild Isle. All Wild Isle guests are required to wear life jackets that are provided before entering the water.

Proper swimwear is required for all water park attractions.

Denim and swimwear with zippers, buckles, rivets or other hard metals or plastic protrusions are not permitted on water park attractions.

Loose shirts are not allowed to be worn on body slides, however, rash guards are permitted.

SPECIAL PERFORMANCES

2:00 - BMX Pros Trick Team
- Street Beat

2:30 - Houston Disc Dogs

3:00 - Ice Wars: Battle of the Carvers

3:30 - Sangre del Sol Fire Performers

4:00 - BMX Pros Trick Team
- Street Beat

4:30 - Sangre del Sol Fire Performers

5:00 - EMCID's Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award Presentation

5:30 - Houston Disc Dogs

6:00 - Sangre del Sol Fire Performers
- Street Beat

6:30 - BMX Pros Trick Team

7:30 - Sangre del Sol Fire Performers

8:30 - Celestial Displays Fireworks Show

VISIT

EMCTX.COM/FI2020

FOR MORE INFO!





*****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

\$1,600
SCHOLARSHIP!
For all graduates within the
EMCID boundaries.*

*see website for details.

Important Dates

July - August 2020

Independence Day Observed (Complex Closed)
Valley Ranch 4th Fest
EMCID Regular Meeting
Tax Free Weekend
EMCID Regular Meeting
East Texas Fire & Ice Festival

July 3
July 4
July 9*
August 7-9
August 13*
August 29

5:30 p.m.

5:30 p.m.
1-9 p.m.

Valley Ranch Town Center
TBA
TBA
Big Rivers Waterpark

**Dates subject to change*

Please visit 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.