



# The Insider





# Shop Local.



Options are available to us every day when we get in the car. Do I turn left or right, drive faster or slow down, or shop at Kroger, HEB, Aldi or Food Town? Each decision has implications on how our area develops and the opportunities for future growth in East Montgomery County. Seeing our area grow and being able to provide the services we did not have in the past is remarkable. Supporting those new businesses is one of the reasons our area has grown as fast as it has.

Shopping decisions do matter, and your actions directly impact the growth of our area. One example is that in our district's 158-square-miles, our organization receives anywhere from one-half cent to one-and-a-half cents in sales tax in which we provide back to the community in the form of economic development, community development and educational development efforts. The most impactful program our community sees, other than the new businesses moving here, is the \$1,600 we provide for every student who graduates from the area. Shopping locally directly impacts our funding for education and strengthens our commitment to the community.

Here are other reasons to shop locally:

**Be the superhero and strengthen your local economy.**

When you shop within our community, the sales taxes you pay stay in our community, in our county. Those funds can then be used by the governmental entities to provide more services for you and our community.

**Job creation.** 80 percent of all jobs created are done by small, local businesses. Small companies provide more than half of the jobs for Americans working in the private sector.

**Keep it unique.** Local businesses understand what this community wants and needs. Local businesses can cater

to our desired product mix, whereas a national chain may not understand those needs, or may not find carrying those specific items profitable so they don't offer them.

**Better customer service.** Better customer service is always evident in a locally owned store where, in many instances, the owner is present and available to resolve problems on the spot.

**Local businesses have power.** Shopping at local businesses gives those owners more power and expansion opportunities. Smaller businesses that grow can make decisions much more quickly when it comes to reinvesting in their business and expanding or hiring more employees. A national chain has to go through numerous levels of decisions makers, and sometimes it can take years to agree to expand or grow their personnel.

**Rely on local expertise rather than national marketing.**

Buy what you need; don't let expensive national marketing campaigns influence your decisions. The internet affects so many decisions with online reviews of products and recommendations on what the next great product is or what you should buy. In many cases talking to the local owner of a store can provide insight into products that work and do not work.

**Support for community nonprofits increases.** Owners of local businesses — whether mom-and-pops or franchises — understand the needs and challenges of a community through engagement with families and locally based nonprofits. Think of the EMC Fair Association, the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts, plus all the clubs and student/parent organizations which have annual fundraisers. Those business owners have children and grandchildren participating, too and tend to donate time or money to the organizations.



## EMCID's Eggcellent Event to be held April 4

Children will have an egg-stra fun time at EMCID's Eggcellent Event scheduled for Saturday, April 4.

Anyone who is some-bunny is invited out to the New Caney High School practice field behind the EMCID Complex for an egg hunt for various age categories and a special appearance by the one-and-only, Easter Bunny.

There will be 80,000 eggs spread out over four hunts. Children with disabilities and those two years old and younger will hunt for eggs starting at 10 a.m. Children ages 3-4 years old will participate in their own egg hunt at 11 a.m., 5, 6 and 7-year-olds hunt at noon and the egg hunt for children 8-12 years old will be at 1 p.m.

**Guests are encouraged to pre-register and pick up their wristbands at the EMCID office located at 25175 Hwy. 59, Suite 200 by April 1.** For those who do, a special prize will be waiting. Otherwise, participants should arrive 30 minutes to one hour before their scheduled egg hunt time to register and receive their wristbands.

For more information or to register, scan the QR code or visit [www.emctx.com](http://www.emctx.com).



Likewise, with organizations like Mission Northeast and New Horizons, local business owners are familiar with the great works of these programs. National chains may not have any personal ties or insight into the needs of local programs.

### Face-to-face relationships.

I have heard some people say, "I like to shop local because I like to yell at the owner."



*Frank McCrady  
President & CEO*

The saying usually gets a laugh. But I also think shopping locally gives us the opportunity to say thank you to the local owners for supporting our community and hiring our residents.

Please consider this when you have options and alternatives for shopping inside or outside the East Montgomery County Improvement District boundary.

*Frank McCrady*





## Levitated Metals Breaks Ground in New Caney

The newest business to call the East Montgomery County Industrial Park home, Levitated Metals, marked the start of construction with a groundbreaking ceremony at the site in January.

"We're excited to welcome Levitated Metals to East Montgomery County," said Frank McCrady, EMCID President/CEO. "The company provides a very unique service, one that's environmentally conscious and makes use of discarded metals which are repurposed into every day products."

A specialty metal recycling company, Levitated Metals uses a special method of "density flotation" to separate scrap metal which is then sold to consumers in the automotive and cast aluminum industries. This will be the second plant of its type built in the United States in over a decade.

The owner, Ronak Shah, hopes to have construction completed in September. This unique metal recycling process will take place at the company's new facility being built in New Caney at the intersection of Ceila Way and Callie Way.



## Presidential Billiards Thrives in Industrial Park

Two warehouses totaling 55,000 square feet full of supplies and pool table materials was just a dream in Elaine Gerber's mind when she first started her company, Presidential Billiards, 20 years ago.

Presidential Billiards first opened a small warehouse and office in The Woodlands but wanted to find a larger space to expand and add more warehouse space for the materials used to make the custom pool tables.

Gerber began to search for the land where the company could build an office and have enough warehouse space for

future expansion when a fellow business owner suggested reaching out to EMCID.

"EMCID was a blessing from heaven," said Gerber. "Through the years with low-interest loans to build additional warehouse space. We would not have been able to do any of this without EMCID's help."

Presidential Billiards produces a variety of products, including a large selection of pool tables and game room furniture from entry-level to heirloom quality with exotic hardwoods and hand carving.



# Business Briefs

## Kelsey-Seybold opens new clinic in Porter

After the original clinic was damaged during Hurricane Harvey, Kelsey-Seybold made the decision to relocate the clinic to Porter on Hwy. 59.

The new clinic opened Jan. 20 for new and existing patients. The clinic offers expanded capacity in primary care, including Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Pediatrics, and Obstetrics/Gynecology. Other specialties include Allergy, Endocrinology, Orthopedics, Podiatry, Pulmonary Medicine and Optometry.



## Spec's Fine Wines and Liquor opens in Porter

Just before the holidays, Spec's opened its newest location in the same shopping center as Harbor Freight at the intersection of Hwy. 59 and FM 1314.

The opening of this store was made possible by voters who approved the liquor initiative in November 2017, which allows alcohol to be sold for off-premise only consumption.

The store features a variety of beer, wine, liquor and non-alcoholic beverages like sparkling water and soda. They are planning to sell meats and cheeses in the future.



## New anchors at New Caney Shopping Center

Planet Fitness and La Michoacana Meat Market will anchor the shopping center in New Caney where Brookshire Brothers called home for 35 years.

Work is already underway to update the front facade to accommodate several tenants. Developer Ralph Tullier said, "This is a great shopping center, like a diamond in the rough, in the middle of a high growth area. We are excited."

Both businesses are expected to open mid-2020.



## Smoothie King, MOD Pizza to call VRTC home

Smoothie King and MOD Pizza are the latest businesses to join Valley Ranch Town Center.

Located at 12029 N. Grand Parkway E, Suite 120 next to My Eyalab, Smoothie King is expected to open in the spring, featuring smoothies with organic veggies and fruits as well as healthy snacks, vitamins and supplements.

Anticipated to open in late June, MOD Pizza will open next to Smoothie King.

MOD lets customers choose from dozens of pizza or salad toppings to create their own masterpiece.







## The Heights on Valley Ranch Serves Seniors

Despite being delayed by Hurricane Harvey in 2017, the developers with VR Porter Health Realty were determined to open a senior living facility in the Porter area.

Since East Montgomery County is classified by the Health Resources and Service Administration as a medically underserved area, they enlisted the assistance of the East Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation, a subsidiary of the EMCID, to build infrastructure to service the facility.

Thus, The Heights on Valley Ranch senior living facility became a reality along the Valley Ranch Parkway near FM 1314.

"This is a great area that we have looked at for a long time," said Andrew Berry with VR Porter Health Realty. "One of the main challenges was building the infrastructure for a commercial property. With the EMCEDC's help, we built sewer lines that stretch from our property to FM 1314 to service the facility. Without EMCEDC's assistance, we wouldn't have been able to put this project together and provide these much-needed services for seniors."

According to Berry, there is a big demand for a facility like this, especially with the medically underserved designation. VR Porter Health Realty was also able to provide technology upgrades through the EMCEDC's assistance.

The Heights on Valley Ranch has approximately 116 beds and provides 24-hour skilled nursing care and rehabilitation services such as speech and occupational and physical therapy. There are private and semi-private rooms to cater to the patient's medical needs.

"The site for The Heights on Valley Ranch is beautiful," said Berry. "There is a great pond in front and trees that surround the building. It's been a long process, but we're excited about the future for this facility."





# Local Businessman Provides Options

Local businessman John Darst, who's also a board member of the East Montgomery County Scholarship Foundation (EMCSF), has found a way for families making difficult end-of-life plans to help future generations with education plans.

Darst, who owns Darst Funeral Home, recently created a program that benefits all involved.

When a family decides on a plan for their future funeral arrangements, the total cost of the funeral will be discounted by up to \$3,500 when they choose to donate the discounted amount to the EMCSF, a nonprofit charitable organization.

"As I have become more involved in the East Montgomery County Scholarship Foundation as a board member, I wanted to find ways to help the students right here in our community," said Darst. "Since Darst Funeral Home first opened, one of our main missions is to give back to families in our community. The kids are our future, so this program is a way to help them and help families pre-plan their funeral arrangements which makes it easier in the long run."

The EMCSF was created by the East Montgomery County Improvement District in 2004 to promote the economic, social and cultural development of the area through education.

Through the EMCSF, three scholarships are available: a \$1,600 scholarship for all local high school graduates, a \$500 merit-based scholarship for current college students and a \$750 paid internship for high school seniors.



# \$1,600 SCHOLARSHIP!

For all graduates within the  
EMCID boundaries.\*

\*see website for details.



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

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

**EAST TEXAS  
FIRE AND ICE  
2020 FESTIVAL**  
at Big Rivers Waterpark & Adventures  
23101 TX-242, New Caney, TX 77357

**THE EXCITEMENT RETURNS!  
SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2020 | 1PM**  
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT EMCTX.COM

## Important Dates

### March - April 2020

Greater EMC Chamber Luncheon	March 4	11-1 p.m.	EMCID Complex Atrium
Daylight Saving Time Begins	March 8	2 a.m.	
EMC Scholarship Foundation Meeting	March 12*	12 p.m.	EMCID Complex, Suite 200
EMC Economic Development Corp. Meeting	March 12*	1:30 p.m.	EMCID Complex, Suite 200
EMCID Regular Meeting	March 12*	5:30 p.m.	EMCID Complex, Suite 103
Spring Community Development Grants Due	March 30	5 p.m.	
Greater EMC Chamber Luncheon	April 1	11-1 p.m.	EMCID Complex Atrium
EMCID's Eggcellent Event	April 4	10 a.m.	
EMCID Regular Meeting	April 9*	5:30 p.m.	EMCID Complex, Suite 103
Good Friday (EMCID Complex Closed)	April 10		
Free Immunizations	April 28	9:30 a.m.	EMCID Complex Atrium

\*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).