



The Insider

EAST TEXAS **FIRE AND ICE** 2020 FESTIVAL at Big Rivers Waterpark & Adventures

FIRE PERFORMERS

BMX STUNTS





As we put together this newsletter in early April before going to print, there is a lot of uncertainty. The repercussions of COVID-19, or coronavirus, have hit the area as a drain on our community's health and resources, our social lives and finances.

We're isolated from friends, family, co-workers, and church congregations. No longer do we have standard meetings; we videoconference. No longer do we join friends on Saturday evening for dinner and a movie. No birthday parties for the kids. No classroom learning, as that's being done at home.

Many of our businesses have closed, being deemed non-essential. Some workers have been furloughed, out of jobs. The businesses that are still open have had to shift gears quite a bit. No in-dining options. Only carryout and delivery. And then there's the craziness at grocery stores with the never-ending search for toilet paper and hand sanitizer.

These are very different times — even from when our last newsletter hit the mailboxes in March. Our future was so bright then. Consumer confidence was high. And now, just so much uncertainty.

If you look for the positives throughout this mess you will find them. Of course our first responders and those on the front lines of the health crisis — our nurses, doctors, and support staff — rose to the occasion (as they always do) and tirelessly worked to treat patients affected by the virus and offered common sense advice to quell our fears. We also want to thank our grocery store employees, truckers and others who kept essential businesses open.

Whether they drove you crazy or not, we all got to spend more time with our spouses and children. When we couldn't watch another minute of television, we drug out board games and came up with creative ways to spend time together.

Many of us gathered around the table for home-cooked meals. How often did you do that before?

Neighbors we really didn't know well, collaborated to make masks or offered to go shopping for our elderly.

The federal government in March authorized funds to help people who've lost wages (hopefully you've received that check by now). There are also federal funds to help businesses recover.

Closer to home, EMCID created OPEN, a loan program for local businesses struggling to stay open or pay its staff. EMCID's Economic Development Corporation immediately deferred for 90 days all loan payments for its clients.

We don't know what exactly our situation will be when this issue hits your mailboxes. But we are certain of this: the American will is strong. East Montgomery County is a closely-knit group of people. We will get through this. Together. We will bounce back better than ever.

We're looking forward to the future. We're still planning events, like Shred It EMC and the East Texas Fire & Ice Festival. We know everyone has been cleaning out their houses and garages. Shred your stuff for free. And we'll definitely all need a break away from the stresses of the last couple of months, so we hope to see you at Big Rivers Waterpark on May 30.

There will be brighter days ahead. We promise.



Local Teen Joins Red Bull Junior Racing Team

Ever since he can remember, cars and racing have always been passions for Jak Crawford. At four years old, Jak's dad, Tim Crawford, bought him a racing kart that he drove around a large parking lot until he was six years old when he officially began racing.

Jak, who is 14 years old, was recently signed as only one of seven people on the Red Bull Junior Team, a small and elite racing program of hand-picked, up-and-coming, world-wide drivers. Red Bull Racing trains future pilots for their two Formula 1 teams to represent the company.

"Once I started racing, I fell in love with it and have loved it ever since," said Jak, who is a Montgomery County resident when he's not on the racing circuit. "Racing, like I am doing as a Red Bull athlete, is very hard to get into. You want to start when you are young if you want to do what I do. You can also start when you are older, but your options will be more limited."

Because of Jak and Tim's passion for racing, building a racing kart track locally was a perfect fit thus, Speedsportz Racing Park in New Caney came to fruition. Tim is the majority owner of Speedsportz and some of the business partners in his real estate development businesses came from people he met at the racetrack.

"We searched all over the USA and Europe and created a world-class karting facility right here in our backyard," said Tim. "This is one of the best karting facilities you will find anywhere. The promise of the Hwy. 242 and U.S. Highway 59 intersection is impressive; some big pieces falling in place now such as a major grocer and the waterpark, Big Rivers. Drive over there and you will see a lot of construction activity. The amount of growth along all of Hwy. 242 and north of the Grand Parkway/99 are going to be very big for many years."

Speedsportz Racing Park opened its doors in 2017 to provide multiple services simultaneously; a rental kart track open to the public; a professional racing track; club



memberships with member garages; and a retail area selling karts, equipment and parts. Speedsportz also has three event rooms for corporate gatherings such as team building activities, bachelor/bachelorette parties and birthday parties.

Although Speedsportz Racing Park opened after Jak was already racing, he frequents the track when he is home to practice for future races. Additionally, Jak started a foundation, the Fast Friends Speed School at Speedsportz, to meet kids with special needs and drive them around the track.

"It is always nice to have a karting track close by so I can go do some practice laps in my racing go-kart," said Jak. "Karting at Speedsportz is a great place to start. Speedsportz is a place where you can start out racing or just go to have some fun. Being a professional race car driver requires a love for the sport and a lot of determination. I would love to see more people in racing, and I love competing against large crowds. The largest crowd I ever raced against was 160 people in one class in Italy. I would encourage people to start racing if they love racing and that's what they want to do with their lives."

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:

Smoothie King, March
Kentucky Fried Chicken, May
America's Best Contacts & Eyeglasses, June
La Michoacana Meat Market, June
MOD Pizza, June
Planet Fitness, June

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

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2020 @ 1PM

EAST TEXAS
FIRE AND ICE 2020
FESTIVAL
at Big Rivers Waterpark & Adventures

23101 TX-242, New Caney, TX 77357

**SNOW
SLIDES**

**WILD
ISLE**

KID ZONE!

**WATER
ATTRACTIONS**

Petting Zoo

Pony Rides

**SPECIAL
PERFORMANCES &
FIREWORKS!**

THE OFFICIAL MAP



THE FREE STUFF

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

THE PAID STUFF

Food and Drinks
All Aerial Attractions (Must reserve online prior to event)
Bait and Gems
Axe Throwing and Archery

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.

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 metal 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

7:00 - Houston Disc Dogs

7:30 - Sangre del Sol Fire Performers

8:45 - Celestial Displays Fireworks Show

RESERVE YOUR

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Table and
Four Chairs,
Two Loungers,
Refrigerator,
Storage,
Ceiling Fan,
and
Privacy Curtains!

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Yours
NOW!
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EMC Law Enforcement Officers Honored

The East Montgomery County Improvement District honored 11 local officers for their hard work and dedication this past February at its annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner.

Each officer honored as Officer of the Year was selected by their respective supervisors and/or co-workers. Trooper Ethan McAdoo with the Texas Department of Public Safety was unable to attend the ceremony but was honored for his dedication and service to the EMC community.

The guest speaker was Dr. Joe Serio, who has been associated with law enforcement since 1987. Serio has delivered more than 200 classes to law enforcement across the United States. He is currently a featured instructor at the Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas at Sam Houston State University. He is the founder and author of the *Get the Nerve* series of books on topics such as managing fear and resistance, improving emotional intelligence, increasing productivity, and managing stress.



Sgt. Tuan-Anh Nguyen
Lone Star College



Dep. Zach Beaty
Constable's Office, Pct. 4



Sgt. Willie Kendrick
Sheriff's Office



Off. Jason Potter
New Caney ISD PD



Sgt. Jeff Campbell
Patton Village PD



Off. Jakob Culver
Roman Forest PD



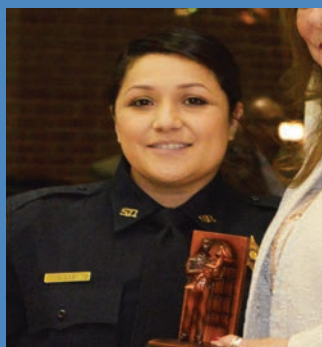
Off. Daniel Santiago
Splendora PD



Trooper John Silvia
DPS



Off. Taylor Lisk
Woodbranch PD



Dep. Stephanie Lee
Sheriff's Office



Annual Shred It EMC To Be Held on May 9

For the fifth year, EMC residents can collect their piles of paperwork sitting around the house or any boxes full of paper to recycle during the Shred It EMC event on Saturday, May 9 from 8 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Shred It EMC is a free document shredding event held at the EMCID Complex parking lot, located at 21575 U.S. Highway 59 North (59 at the Grand Parkway) in New Caney.

Shredding is a quick and convenient way to dispose of sensitive information in a manner that provides added security against identity theft — and it's great for the environment. All shredded documents are recycled.

Vehicles should enter through Eagle Drive by the R.B. Tullis Library and drive straight back to the EMCID Complex. Vehicles will exit right onto the U.S. Highway 59 frontage road.

Acceptable to Shred

- Any office paper
- File folders
- Thin cardboard
- No need to remove staples, paper clips, rubber bands or small binders

Expectations vs. Reality

The objectives from the university were very simple and clear from day one: go to work, learn, finish classwork, graduate. I was to spend my last 12 weeks as a college student, working for the East Montgomery County Improvement District in Communications.

When I walked in on my first day I expected a very traditional internship — making copies, sitting in on meetings, assisting with simple tasks, and so on. Even after being there for one week, I knew that was not the case. I had gotten myself into so much more.

I grew up in the EMC area and only left for college, so I thought I knew how everything worked, but I was wrong. I had no clue how my own community worked or how we grew so much. I have a much greater appreciation for EMCID's contributions and the entire community. I learned how unique our community is and how connected we all are.

The employees of EMCID taught me that work can be fun and you can thoroughly enjoy your coworkers, even if you may not know them well. I have learned a little about each person in the office and they've learned a little about me. They made this experience much more than I could ever expect it to be. The camaraderie between the employees there is commendable and will make finding a job after this one extremely hard.

Through this experience, I met many great and important



Not accepted

- Thick cardboard
- Common trash
- Hazardous materials
- Plastics or metals
- CDs, DVDs

people in the community and attended events that I had never heard of, like Rotary club luncheons, Chamber events, and so on.

EMCID and their work never stopped surprising me. I couldn't wait to see EMCID's Eggcellent Event and the East Texas Fire & Ice Festival. However, COVID-19 came in and put a hold on some events, and EMCID used this to show me how to work around a crisis and how to handle the situation properly.

Eventually, my in-office internship came to a halt with stay-at-home orders, but I kept working from home. My experience with EMCID taught me more in the 6 weeks that I was in the office than I would've learned anywhere else in the full 12 weeks. This has definitely been one of my favorite college experiences and I am grateful that Kelley Mattlage and the rest of EMCID allowed me to work with them and learn from them.





*****ECRWSS****

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Scholarship!

For all graduates within the
EMCID boundaries.*

*see website for details.




emctx.com

Important Dates

May - June 2020

Fifth Annual Shred It EMC	May 9	8-2 p.m.	EMCID Parking Lot
Mother's Day	May 10		
EMCID Regular Board Meeting	May 14*	5:30 p.m.	EMCID Complex, Suite 103
Memorial Day (EMCID Complex closed)	May 25		
East Texas Fire & Ice Festival	May 30	1 p.m.	Big Rivers Waterpark
Greater EMC Chamber Luncheon	June 3*	11-1 p.m.	EMCID Complex Atrium
EMC Scholarship Foundation Meeting	June 11*	12 p.m.	EMCID Complex, Suite 200
EMC Economic Development Corp.	June 11*	1:30 p.m.	EMCID Complex, Suite 200
EMCID Regular Board Meeting	June 11*	5:30 p.m.	EMCID Complex, Suite 103
Free Children's Immunizations	June 23	9:30 a.m.	EMCID Complex Atrium

**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.