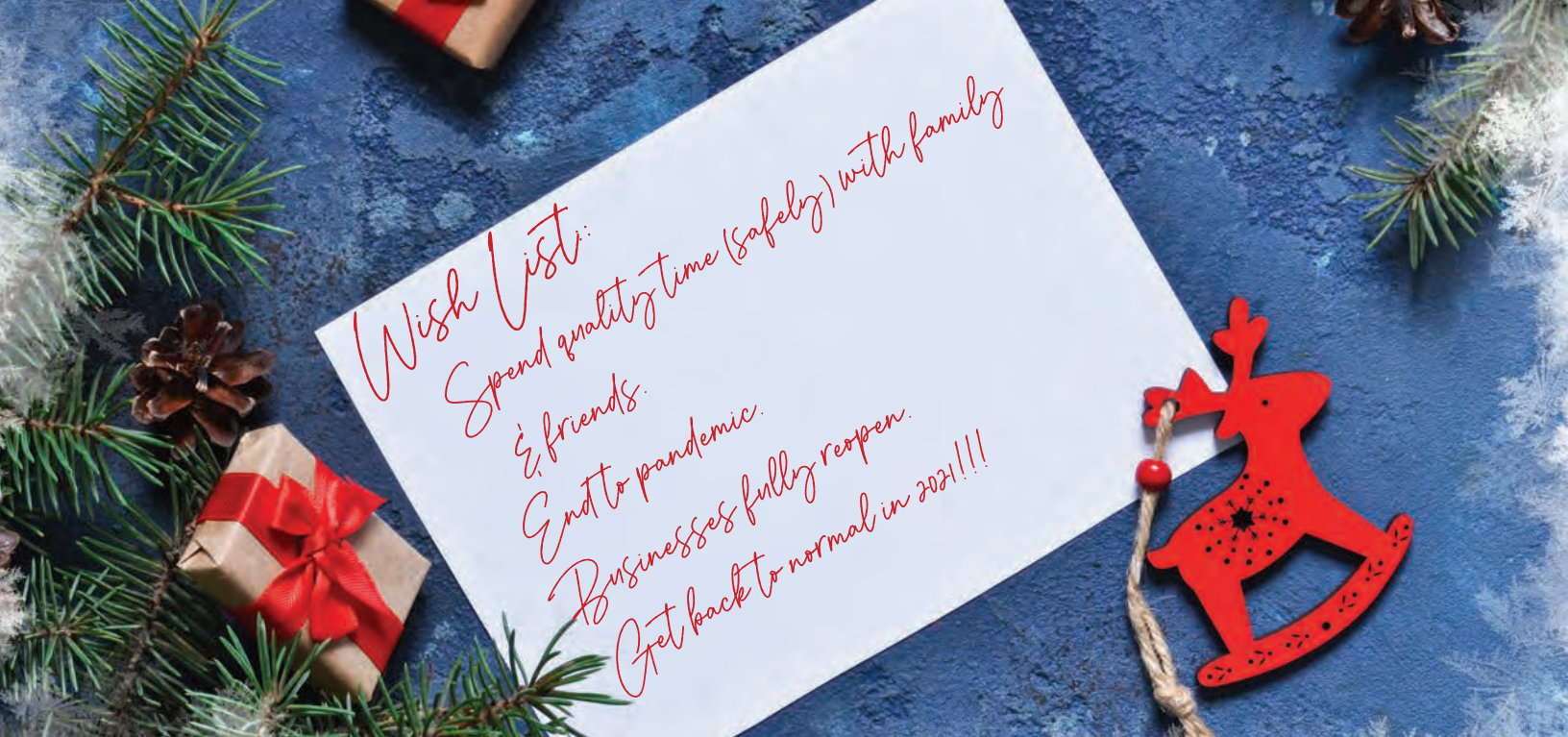




The Insider





Hopefully, at the time you're reading this, we're approaching the end of 2020 (*we gotta get outta here*), and the prospects of 2021 being a better year than 2020 are very bright. With the upcoming holiday season in mind, family has historically been a very important aspect this time of the year. This is when we get together with our college students who've come home, relatives and extended family and reflect and celebrate the values of family. I am optimistic this pandemic will be brought under control in 2021 and I feel excited about the upcoming year with more jobs available and new opportunities for workers in our district.

You've probably heard these things a million time, but it doesn't hurt to mention some things to consider in our holiday gatherings:

1. Higher levels of infection occur when more attendees come to an event from various locations.
2. Indoor gatherings are certainly higher risk than outdoor gatherings.
3. Gatherings that last longer pose more risk than shorter gatherings.
4. The larger the gathering the higher likelihood of passing infectious diseases among the attendees.
5. Attendees traveling from different places pose a higher risk than gatherings of individuals who live in the same area.
6. Behaviors of the attendees prior to the gathering are important for the host to be aware of.
7. Gatherings utilizing mass social distancing and handwashing absolutely reduce the infection rate.
8. Food preparation and serving areas should be monitored to limit the number of people going in and out, such as the kitchen or around the grill. If serving

any food consider having one person serve all the food so that multiple people are not handling the serving utensils.

I further want to encourage our residents to get the flu vaccine this year and hopefully alleviate flu and COVID-19 confusion if they begin feeling ill.

Many of us are feeling like we need some relief. I am one of you. It's time for the "getting back to normal" party. Things I am excited about include the big Christmas dinner with family around the table. The annual office Christmas party. The party with our neighbors and community friends. A casual dinner with just a friend or two. The midnight Christmas Eve service or midnight Mass. Shopping in a real store. Celebrating New Year's Eve and ringing in 2021 with the excitement that our lives will get back to normal.

I want to end by saying thank you for supporting our local businesses. It has been so important during a difficult time for business owners and employees.

Merry Christmas! And I hope your holidays are enjoyable and the focus on the end of 2020 can be great fellowship with our family and friends.



Frank McCrady
President & CEO



December 19 - January 3

Valley Ranch Town Center | 22296 Market Place Drive, New Caney

"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas..." in New Caney at EMCID's annual A Holiday to Remember located at 22296 Market Place Drive in Valley Ranch Town Center.

Kicking off Dec. 19 and ending Jan. 3, the annual event will feature everything from ice skating to bumper cars, snow slides, a classic car show, polar golf, hot cocoa bar, Market Days, train rides, horse carriage rides, movies and of course, a visit from the jolly old man himself, Santa Claus.



A Holiday to Remember Schedule

The rink will be open Saturday, Dec. 19 through Sunday, Jan. 3, 2021. The operating hours are 11-8 p.m., except for Christmas Eve — 11-4 p.m., Christmas Day — 4-8 p.m., and New Year's Eve — 11-4 p.m.

Season Passes

Season Passes for Ice Skating can be purchased for \$50 (\$80 value) per person and are good for all-day admission during each day of the 16-days of operation. A Holiday to Remember Season Pass can be purchased for \$150 (\$240 value) per person and are good for all-day admission to all attractions during the entirety of the event.

Private Party Rooms

Four private party rooms can be reserved for up to 80 guests (depending on the room size) for two or more hours or all day. It's the perfect spot to have a birthday party or added privacy. Reservations will be taken, first come, first served.

After Hours Ice Rink Rental

The party room and ice rink can also be rented for private events after operating hours, so guests will have the entire rink to themselves to enjoy. Rink rental hours begin at 9 p.m. and end at midnight. There is a limit to 150 guests and the rental rate is \$550. Reservations will be taken first come.

For more information, visit www.emctx.com/icerink2020.



Market Days

Pick up your last minute holidays gifts at the first Market Days featuring vendors selling handmade and unique items like Christmas/holiday items/decor, children's items, ironworks, jewelry, ceramics, candles, artisanal foods, wood crafts, hand-blown glass, women's clothing and accessories, local arts and crafts. The Market will kick off with a Preview Night Friday, Dec. 18 at 5 p.m. The Market will be open from 11-8 p.m. from Dec. 19-21.

Cost

Walk-through and attending the Market Days, A Visit with Santa, Letters to Santa, the movie showings, and the Classic Car Show are FREE. Admission to ice skating is \$5 a person which includes the cost of skate rental. For \$15 ALL ACCESS, guests can participate in ice skating, snow slides, bumper cars and polar golf.



Longtime Volunteer Honored With Award

When Isidor Ybarra opened his restaurant, Ricardo's Mexican Restaurant, in East Montgomery County in 1983, he knew the keys to success was to get involved in the community to ensure success for his business and the community.

Once he retired in 2006, Isidor continued to be involved in all aspects of his EMC community from the chamber of commerce to serving on the EMCID board from 2000-2012 and volunteering with countless other organizations. For his dedication and service to EMC, Isidor was honored with EMCID's Outstanding Citizen Award at the East Texas Fire & Ice Festival on Aug. 29.

"I was very surprised when they announced that I would be the recipient of the Outstanding Citizen Award," said Isidor. "I feel blessed to be honored and to be a part of such a wonderful community. It is a very rewarding experience to be involved in so many different organizations in EMC that have enhanced the quality of the community and our residents' lives."

As a word of advice to future generations, Isidor encouraged them to get more involved organizations to help with future growth in EMC and help the community continue to prosper.

"Isidor dedicated a tremendous amount of personal time to the District," said Frank McCrady, President/CEO of EMC. "He brought a wealth of knowledge to the Board and a deep desire to serve the community. The Board and I appreciate his vision and know that he'll be around to continue to serve this community in whatever way it needs him."

In addition to the Outstanding Citizen Award presentation, the East Texas Fire & Ice Festival boasted activities for the whole family throughout the day and guests had the chance to cool off in the various water activities at Big Rivers Waterpark.

Approximately 3,000 guests filled the spacious park to catch a fire dancing show, ice carving, disc dogs, BMX show, slide down a snow slide and watch Street Beat, an American urban drum and dance troupe; before the day ended with a fireworks show sponsored by Celestial Displays.



Drive-thru Back to School Bash Successful

Hundreds of residents drove through the EMCID parking lot for the annual Back to School Bash in September where they were given a package of school supplies and reusable children's masks.

EMCID staff worked to hand out over 1,000 school supply packs and 5,000 masks to help local children get the school year started on the right foot despite delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Splendor Cafe & BBQ Set to Relocate

For more than 16 years, Splendor Café & BBQ has been a household name for diners craving barbecue or a good, old-fashioned home-cooked meal.

It will be the end of an era as Splendor Café will move from its current location in Splendor to a new spot in New Caney near State Highway 242. They are expecting to open the new restaurant in January 2021.

"We took ownership of Splendor Café in November 2004," said Splendor Café owner Rodrigo Tamayo. "My dad had managed a barbecue restaurant in Houston since 1982 and was finally ready to run his own place, so Splendor Café was the perfect opportunity for us. We continue to be family-owned and operated, employing residents from our community."

Many in the East Montgomery County area flock to the small restaurant located north of FM 2090 for country staples such as the chicken fried steak and baked potatoes or the fresh salad bar. The original Splendor Café was located more centrally in the city before it moved to a new development on Hwy. 59 where they have served hungry customers for more than a decade.

As the Grand Texas development began to take shape, Tamayo had the opportunity to relocate his popular restaurant. He decided to take that chance to move to a location with more visibility and more centrally located in the East Montgomery County area.

"The new location will help grow our customer base as it's situated in the Grand Texas development area," said Rodrigo. "The difference between the two restaurants will be that it is newer/updated with a small bar area and an area



for private parties if needed. Our customers can expect the same great food and service, but also we hope to improve on what we have built over the 16 years we have been in business."

The owners broke ground on the new Splendor Café restaurant location in July and construction has continued to progress.

"We are grateful to have loyal customers that continue to spread good things about our restaurant to others," said Rodrigo. "Thus, helping us grow from a small 10-table cafe into a much-larger 40 table establishment that still has that small-town cafe feel. We are all excited about this next step and look forward to our customers enjoying the new place with the food and service they have come to love throughout the years."

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:

Starbucks (New Caney,) September
El Tiempo Cantina, September
Beehive Boutique and Garden, October
MOD Pizza, October
La Michoacana (New Caney,) Fall
Chipotle, Fall
DECA Beer Comapny, Fall
La Daiquiria, Fall
Pinspiration, Fall
Whitewater Express Car Wash, Fall
Italiano's, Winter
Poké Yana, Winter

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





*****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

A HOLIDAY TO REMEMBER

DECEMBER 19 - JANUARY 3

Valley Ranch Town Center | 22296 Marketplace Drive, New Caney, Texas 77357

Market Days, Ice Skating, Ice Slides, Santa, Holiday Movies, & Much More!

Important Dates

November-December 2020

| | | | |
|---|----------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Veteran's Day (EMCID Complex Closed) | November 11 | | |
| EMCID Regular Meeting | November 12* | 5:30 p.m. | EMCID Complex, Suite 103 |
| Thanksgiving Holiday (EMCID Complex Closed) | November 26-27 | | |
| EMC Scholarship Foundation Meeting | December 10* | 12 p.m. | EMCID Complex, Suite 200 |
| EMC Economic Development Corp. Meeting | December 10* | 1:30 p.m. | EMCID Complex, Suite 200 |
| EMCID Regular Meeting | December 10* | 5:30 p.m. | EMCID Complex, Suite 103 |
| A Holiday to Remember Event | Dec. 19-Jan. 3 | | 22296 Market Place Dr. (VRTC) |
| Christmas Holidays (EMCID Complex Closed) | Dec. 24-31 | | |

**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.