

# THE INSIDER

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EAST MONTGOMERY COUNTY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



Soon to be Made  
**in EMC**  
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Hop Over to the  
**Eggcellent  
Event**  
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# TOILET PAPER, EXPANSION, AND JOBS



*Heydi Castaneda talks paper with Director Crystal Moore.*



*Ricardo Soto discusses with Directors Stephen Carlisle and Liz Mullane the sheer size of the rolls that come into the facility to be cut and packaged.*

It's not every day that you get to work on a project that touches every single resident of our district (hopefully) daily. After a period of planning and negotiating over the past 12 months, EMCID has reached an agreement for GCP Paper USA Inc. to purchase 32 acres in the East Montgomery County Industrial Park for a \$200 million dollar expansion project. GCP is recognized as a leading producer of private label tissue products, like toilet paper, paper towels, and napkins, for Sam's Club, Walmart, HEB, Costco, and Aldi. You most likely have bought and used their product but just never knew where it came from. Soon, the products will come from our own backyard.

The new warehouse facility in New Caney, with an initial footprint of 190,000 sf., will be constructed within 18 months of closing. The second phase adds packaging capabilities and will be operational within 24 months. This piece includes moving their current packaging operations in Houston to New Caney as well as acquiring additional production equipment. Finally, within 36 months, GCP will add a conversion facility that takes recycled paper and processed wood and manufactures it into the large toilet paper rolls. The conversion currently occurs at its plants in Mexico.

This project will create over 200 additional jobs for our local community, and it will be one of the highest ad valorem value projects to ever come. This exciting project will result in an additional \$200 million dollar investment and an increase in revenues for Lone Star College, local schools, ESD 7, law enforcement, and other entities which rely on higher taxable values within their boundaries.

Commissioner Matt Gray and Entergy were both vital partners of this business move to ensure the appropriate utilities and infrastructure were in place, insuring GCP selected EMC as their new home.



*Frank McCrory*





# Business

## BRIEFS & HAPPENINGS

What's going on in and around our community.



**Crumbl Cookies**



**Victoria's Secret**



**Carter's**

Crumbl Cookies and Victoria's Secret opened new locations in Valley Ranch Town Center. Crumbl, which features different cookie flavors each week, is located at 12073 N. Grand Pkwy East in New Caney. Victoria's Secret features a new store layout and Pink collection as well as the bath and body collections of lotions, perfumes, and body sprays, located at 11985 N. Grand Pkwy.

Carter's opened a new location in Valley Ranch Town Center, located at 11985 N. Grand Pkwy/99 in New Caney, near Bath & Body Works and Yummy Tummy Bakery. The store is co-branded with OshKosh B'gosh.



**Dave's Hot Chicken**



**Paige Lynn & Co.**



**PetSuites of America**

Dave's Hot Chicken opened a new location in January, located at 21690 Hwy 59 in New Caney in Valley Ranch Town Center. Pick up chicken tenders and sliders with sides like fries, cheese fries, and mac and cheese. You can choose your spice level.

The Paige Lynn & Co. boutique opened a storefront location in New Caney. Located at 1714 Roman Forest Blvd., Suite A, across from the Roman Forest city park, Paige Lynn focuses on women's clothing and accessories. The boutique began selling clothes at local markets before opening the store. Paige Lynn will continue to sell at markets in the future.

Construction began on the plat of land where PetSuites of America will be located at 25748 Loop 494 in Porter near Popeyes, Kroger, and Northpark Drive. PetSuites is a Pet Boarding and Daycare facility for dogs and cats and provides grooming and training services for dogs.



# EMCID TEAM SPOTLIGHT

The Team Spotlight is a new feature of The Insider. Each issue will focus on one or two EMCID employees, written by their co-workers. We'll highlight their personality, character, work ethic and job.

By Kelley Mattlage

When I first met Ryan, he walked in the conference room to interview for a job I had posted about managing our Christmas event, A Holiday to Remember, in 2020 — during a pandemic. All 6'7" towered over me as he leaned in to shake my hand and with a booming voice said, "Hi. I'm Ryan Bonifas." I quickly learned that everything about him would be as big and bold as Texas.

One would immediately assume he played basketball while growing up in Ft. Worth, but no, baseball is his beloved sport. Ryan played college baseball at Eastfield College in Mesquite and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi before finishing his undergraduate degree in Communications with an emphasis on Journalism at the University of Texas at Arlington. And, like most north Texans, the Texas Rangers are his team. With his larger-than-life personality, it's no surprise that he's one of the originators of "Hank's Homies," a crazy fan club of former Ranger Hank Blalock, who played in the mid- to late- 2000s.

But baseball would end up being something to enjoy, not something to work for. With degree in hand, Ryan pursued venue and event management. His career began at the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra as the Production Manager for performances at Bass Performance Hall and Festival Manager for their 5 week outdoor music festival, Concerts in the Garden. One of the highlights of his time with the symphony was producing concerts at the world-famous Carnegie Hall in New York City.



----- RYAN



Hank Blalock (#9) with Hank's Homies.

## Ryan Bonifas

Director of Venue & Events  
(The Atrium Center) since 2020



Ryan next transitioned to venue management at Fair Park in Dallas. On his second day, Texas icon Big Tex burned down at the State Fair of Texas, not his fault — he promises. During his 7 years at Fair Park, Ryan was a part of many amazing events, including Chanel's Metiers d'Art Fashion Show, Rock N Roll Half Marathon, and American Ninja Warrior.

Ryan's next stop was North Carolina to take the position of Director of Events for the Raleigh Convention Center.

In February 2020, he and his wife, Alicia — who I swear must be a saint to be married to him (I kid! I kid!) — were ready to make the biggest career jump of their lives. Ryan had been speaking with the 2020 World's Fair in Dubai on and off for 18 months when he and Alicia were both offered opportunities in Dubai. We all know what happened next month: the fair was delayed a year and those job offers were rescinded as the world shut down. But lucky for us!

As Director of Venue and Events, Ryan went to work revamping the improvement district's building to make it more of a rentable venue, rather than a government office building that sometimes served as a wedding venue. The building was rebranded as The Atrium Center, and after numerous repairs and some updates, it reopened in December 2021 and has held over 120 events and welcomed over 10,000 attendees since then.

He's been heavily involved over the last two years in planning and designing the 218,000 sf conference center EMCID will break ground on this year. Who knew there would be so many decisions to be made? Literally, thousands. His next decisions may be the most important: build an expert staff that will help make the facility top notch in customer service and operations.

It's a big job, but there's none he considers more important than being a father to son Brooks. He's Ryan's mini-me, athletically inclined, smart, inquisitive and all boy. Brooks is also a lot of fun — just like his dad.

We're blessed to have Ryan as an employee — even if he seems like a pesky little brother at times — and we can't wait to see what he accomplishes over the next few years.



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Degree:** Bachelor of Arts in Communications,  
UT-Arlington

**Pursuing:** Master of Science in Hospitality  
Management: Mega Events Specialization,  
Florida International University

**Certification/continuing education:**  
Certified Venue Professional (CVP),  
Graduate of International Association of Venue  
Management School and Venue,  
Graduate of Management School Graduate  
Institute

**Awards:** Bronze Pinnacle Award from the  
International Festivals & Events Association  
for Best Emergency Preparedness & Risk  
Management Plan for EMCID's A Holiday to  
Remember

## INTERESTING FACTS

On events: I love the challenge of every day being  
different from the last one. I have stayed in the  
event management industry because of the people.  
I love working with people on their vision and  
making a great event.

Torn rotator cuff and labrum ended college  
baseball career.

Has run 2 half marathons, cannot dunk a  
basketball, and once had a fastball that topped out  
at 94mph. Now 6'6" looks like a mile away.

Favorite memory: October 31, 2013, the day his  
little dude was born.



Alicia, Ryan and Brooks

Celebrate springtime at  
EMCID's FREE annual

# EGGCELLENT EVENT

Saturday, April 1 at Don Ford Stadium

located at 22784 Hwy. 59 in Porter.

The market and entry begin at 9 a.m.

The egg hunts begin at 10 a.m.

Shop local vendors in our spring market  
and hunt for 80,000 eggs  
spread out on the field.



# 80,000

# EGGS



There will be four different egg hunts starting with  
children with disabilities and those two years old  
and younger at 10 a.m. Children ages 3-4 years  
old will participate in their egg hunt at 10:30 a.m.,  
5-, 6-, and 7-year-olds hunt at 11 a.m.,  
and the egg hunt for children  
8-12 years old will be at 11:30 a.m.



# SIGN UP for InSights!



## The Insider InSights

**Be the first to know about  
breaking news on businesses,  
events, and other community  
news with EMCID's newest  
eNewsletter, InSights!**

Before it's online or on social media, InSights will hit your inbox, so make sure you sign up to receive the newsletter.

InSights is also a great way to share important news and events with our community between The Insider editions.

Scan the QR code to sign up for EMCID's newest communication tool — *InSights* — an eNewsletter you can read any time of the day.



**SHRED-IT EMC**  
Secure Shredding  
**FREE EVENT**

**Saturday, April 22,  
8am-2pm**

**21575 US 59,  
New Caney, TX 77357**



Cultivated and locally sourced, the East Montgomery County Improvement District and the Atrium Center partnered with Kingwood-based Awen Apiaries to produce honey through three beehives. One of the beehives sits on the grounds of the Atrium Center adjacent to the R.B. Tullis Library, and the other two beehives are housed at Awen Apiaries. Awen Apiaries, a family of chemical-free beekeepers in Kingwood, manages our bees and collects the honeycombs for the products. The combs collected from the beehives are transformed into honey, honey sticks, and wax-based products at Awen's location in Kingwood.

# BUZZ OVER

to the site for more info!







Commissioner Matt Gray



From the Commissioner's Desk

# KNOCKING DOWN WALLS

Two months in office and Commissioner Matt Gray has focused on creating a new and welcoming office environment for the public and a team culture with his staff. Part of the process included knocking down a literal wall that separated the public from office staff.

"I felt like it was a very physical and symbolic barrier that shouldn't exist between this office and residents," said Gray. "Residents need to feel like they're seen and heard and are a part of the process that makes the commissioner's office work for them."



Employees removed the wall between the front door and office staff.

Within the office, Commissioner Gray is eager to instill a culture among employees that focuses on pride, team work, and customer service. He knows that employees' actions, interactions and attitudes shape the effectiveness of the precinct's success. Gray strives for a positive mindset in the office and the field and surmises that each employee will be better at what they do by working together as a cohesive group.



Precinct 4 employees Kiley Holbrook, Hugo Sanchez, and Tim Stewart meet with Commissioner Gray.

As for the duties of the commissioner, Gray says he is hard at work developing a plan to speed up progress on the 2015 road bond projects as well as drainage.

"We've got a long way to go, but I'm confident we'll see much needed progress quickly, and then we can tackle things that will improve upon the greatness of East County."



Crews are cleaning up the area at the commissioner's office to add more coverage for equipment so that it's not susceptible to the weather elements.



Montgomery County Precinct 4

## HEAVY TRASH DAY

Saturday, March 25, 2023 | 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.





\*\*\*\*\*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!



 **EAST MONTGOMERY COUNTY**  
SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

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).