Bobby Katsabas said low prices and good food are behind his 18 years of success running his Katy restaurant, Snappy’s Cafe & Grill.

“I have customers who have been eating here since I opened in 2002,” Katsabas said. “Katy is very nice. They support me, and I support them. It’s an old mom and pop store. We still have the same people working here after all these years, and everybody knows everybody.”

Conversely, various big-name and locally owned

**Corps liable for flooding private property**

According to a judge’s December order, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers unlawfully took private property upstream of the Addicks and Barker reservoirs to store stormwater during Hurricane Harvey.

_Sources:_ Irvine & Conner PLLC, Burns Charest LLP

“**Stormwater storage**

The Corps needed to purchase 33,785 acres to store the maximum amount of stormwater upstream of the reservoirs during major rain events, but it only purchased 25,052 acres.

Government-owned land that flooded during Harvey: 25,052 acres

Privately owned land that flooded during Harvey: 7,054 acres

$1B-$5B

Property owners upstream of the reservoirs may be eligible to receive billions in monetary relief.

**Flood terms**

Here are the differences between some key terms for flood mitigation.

Flood pool: area in which during major storm events, water is pooled or stored

Flood plain: areas at risk for flooding during a specified intensity rainfall event

Flood zone: flood plains that the Federal Emergency Management Agency has defined according to varying levels of flood risk

_Sources:_ Harris County Flood Control District, Fort Bend County Drainage District/Community Impact Newspaper

**Katy-area restaurants see more competition**

Demographic changes, increased diversity play a role, experts say

BY NOLA Z. VALENTE

Bobby Katsabas said low prices and good food are behind his 18 years of success running his Katy restaurant, Snappy’s Cafe & Grill.

“I have customers who have been eating here since I opened in 2002,” Katsabas said. “Katy is very nice. They support me, and I support them. It’s an old mom and pop store. We still have the same people working here after all these years, and everybody knows everybody.”

Conversely, various big-name and locally owned

CONTINUED ON 28
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Amerant HELOCs have a 10-year draw period during which advances may be made, followed by a 10 or 20 year repayment term during which the line is no longer accessible and minimum monthly payments fully amortize the outstanding balance on the line. Rates, program terms, and conditions are subject to change without notice. For more information on home equity products, refer to “What You Should Know about Home Equity Lines of Credit,” a consumer information booklet prepared by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Consult your tax advisor concerning interest deductibility.

“Fixed-Rate Choice HELOC” means the Fixed Rate Option (FRO) or the Fixed Rate Choice Home Equity Line of Credit (FRC-HELOC), using the Fixed Rate Loan Option (FRO) during the draw period (Borrowers can convert outstanding variable interest rate balances to fixed rate loans within terms of 5, 5, 5, 10, 15 or 20 years). On the initial draw request, the FRO rate will be fixed for a 5-year term beyond the expiration of the draw period, resulting in fixed monthly payments on such balance at a fixed interest rate amortized over the selected term. The minimum FRO amount is $1,000 in Florida and $4,000 in Texas. No more than 5 FROs may be outstanding at one time.

Introduction fixed rate of 2.75% Annual percentage rate (APR) shown applies only during the first 5 years to advances made at closing from a new FRC-HELOC and converted to a FRLO with a 5-year repayment term at account opening, up to a maximum of $100,000. Offer cannot be combined with any other offer or discount. Therefore, rates are variable and based on the Prime Rate published in the Wall Street Journal (4.75% as of 01/03/2020), plus a margin. Payment example for a FRLO of $25,000 at 2.75% will have a payment of principal and interest of approximately $446.45 per month for 60 months.

This APR is based on a 10-year repayment term and reflects (1) an “auto-pay” discount of 0.25% for Amerant Bank checking account customers and (2) an “initial draw” discount of 0.25% for making a $50,000 minimum initial draw at closing and maintaining that balance through the first 3 billing cycles. To qualify for the “auto-pay” discount, payments must be made via automatic payment from an Amerant Bank checking account which must be open and funded prior to closing. The rate may be terminated upon closure of the qualifying checking account. Your APR may vary based on credit history, property type, occupancy, lien position, line amount and other factors. At no time will the APR exceed 9%. All other advances will be subject to the variable rate APR according to the terms of the account agreement. Discounts are subject to change at any time and cannot be combined with any other offer or discount. Proceeds from advances made at closing cannot be used to pay off existing Amerant loan balances.

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amerantbank.com

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS MONTH

FROM SUSAN: February is a special month with not just one, but two guides. Check out our Summer Camp Guide (See Pages 18-19) and turn to our Primary Voter Guide (See Page 21) for a list of candidates.

Susan Rovegno, GENERAL MANAGER

FROM JEN: In this issue, one of our front-page stories looks at the restaurant scene in the Katy area. With several closures recently, we wanted to see what factors help a restaurant thrive in Katy. Check out the story and what we learned (See Pages 28-29).

Jen Para, EDITOR

THIS ISSUE BY THE NUMBERS

33 Local sources
17 New businesses
16 Community events
159 Primary candidates

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CORRECTION: Volume 8, Issue 5
Businesses that have recently opened or are coming soon, relocating or expanding

**January 2020**

1. **Luna y Sol Mexican Eatery**
   - Opened soft opening events in late January at 9115 FM 723, Ste. 500, Richmond. A grand opening is planned for March and will have artists who painted the restaurant’s murals join the celebration. The eatery serves modern Mexican dishes such as street tacos and burritos. 281-762-7588. www.lunaysolmexicaneatery.com

2. **Brown Eyed Girl Design by Roxie**
   - Held a grand opening Feb. 1 at 30318 Second St., Fulshear. The business sells boho-style clothing and jewelry. Items include clothing and accessories made by artisans in Mexico. Many clothing items are hand embroidered and inspired by Mexican cities such as Puebla. Owned by Roxanne Diaz, Brown Eyed Girl also has an online Etsy shop. 832-419-9272. www.facebook.com/BEGDbyRoxie/

3. **LA Fitness**
   - Opened a new location Jan. 27 at 26726 FM 1093, Richmond, near Flusher. The gym offers cardio and weight machines, free weights, a pool and basketball courts. 346-707-1602. www.lafitness.com

4. **New location of Dairy Queen**
   - Opened in January at 3121 W. Grand Parkway N., Katy. The chain offers blizzards, cones and chicken strips as well as a variety of ice cream treats such as sundaes. 832-437-3596. www.dairyqueen.com

5. **Saigon USA Pho & Grill**
   - Held a grand opening for its new location at 15014 Westheimer Pkwy, Katy, Dec. 8. The menu includes pho, rice plates, salads and Chinese-style lo mein. Saigon USA has another location in The Woodlands. 832-437-5273. www.saigonusakatyrestaurant.com

6. **Floors for Living**
   - Opened a new location at 2404 Teixmati Drive, Katy, Dec. 14. The Missouri City-based brand offers a variety of flooring options for homes and businesses such as carpet, tile, hardwood, laminate and vinyl. It has 23 other store locations across the Greater Houston area, including two in the Katy area. 832-437-5754. www.floorsforliving.com

7. **The Hammam Spa**
   - Held a grand opening Feb. 22 for a new location at 15014 Lakefair Drive, Ste. B, Richmond, though it’s been serving walk-ins in January. The business provides Moroccan spa services, massages, herbal wraps, baths, facials and foot treatments. Products include natural ingredients including Argan oil and Moroccan black soap. 832-363-3017. www.thehammamspa.com

8. **Image Studios 360**
   - Held a grand opening Jan. 24 for its new location at 15014 Lakefair Drive, Ste. B, Richmond, though it’s been serving walk-ins in January. The business provides luxury spaces for salon professionals—such as hair stylists, aestheticians, mani-pedi technicians and massage therapists—to rent and make their own. 346-291-6576. https://image-studios-360-katy.business.site/

9. **Kolache Factory**
   - Held a grand opening for its new location at 23021 Morton Ranch Road, Ste. A, on Feb. 15. The Kolache factory was founded in 1882 in Houston and offers Phylle cheesesteak and barbecue-filled kolaches as well as pastries filled with fruits, meat and cheese. 346-388-0240. www.kolachefactory.com

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**Similar to the new page:**

**Image Studios 360**
- **26526 Prairie School Ln.**
- **$147,000**
- **Julie Pickett**
  - **713.444.7099**

**Kolache Factory**
- **23021 Morton Ranch Rd.**
- **$140,000**
- **Val Howell**
  - **281.908.4228**

**Dairy Queen**
- **26726 FM 1093**
- **$540,000**
- **Walter Hudec**
  - **713.705.3047**

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- **Katy, TX 77494**
- **281.646.1136**
  - **GaryGreene.com**
COMING SOON

10 New apartment complex The Tessa at Katy will open in the spring at 150 Cobria Drive, Katy. The complex offers one-, two- and three-bedroom units ranging from about 680-1,500 square feet. Monthly rent begins at $1,135. Amenities include a resort-style swimming pool, a cabana, a gaming lawn, a dog park, a hammock park and an entertainment room with a TV wall, a pool table and a sports simulator. A gym will also be available to residents. 833-775-3537. www.tessaatkaty.com

11 Shipley Do-Nuts will open a new store at 6300 FM 1463, Ste. 100, Fulshear in early 2020. The Houston-based business offers a variety of sweet treats including glazed doughnuts, sprinkled doughnuts, cream filled doughnuts and cinnamon rolls. Kolaches are also served filled with cheese, meat and veggies. 713-869-4636. www.shipleydonuts.com

12 Dance Vision Fulshear plans to open at 4020 FM 1463, Ste. 105, Fulshear, this spring. It is owned by Andy and Mary Beth Koenigsberger. The business will offer group and private dance lessons in a variety of styles including tango, waltz, swing and the county Western two-step. It will also offer party packages and provide instruction for weddings. 979-332-4426. www.dancevisionfulshear.com

13 Southern Reformed Seminary relocated to 2611 Beckendorff Road, Katy, from 4740 Dacoma St., Houston, in mid-December, according to a press release. The school provides theological secondary education and allows students to learn in Korean, Spanish or English. The seminary is working to receive accreditation from the Association for Biblical Higher Education. Another campus is located at 7304 Homestead Road, Houston. 346-214-9199. www.srsem.net


15 Handlebar Cyclery relocated at the end of 2019 to 24948 FM 1093, Ste. 220, Richmond, near Fulshear, store Manager Richard Ryder said. It was previously located on Westheimer Lakes Drive, also near Fulshear. The locally owned store sells bicycles and bike accessories and has a repair shop. Handlebar also offers a recreational bike club and may start a children’s racing circuit if there is enough interest in the community. 832-437-7584. www.handlebarcyclery.com

16 Cajun Comforts Crawfish & Seafood Co. has relocated in January to 24811 Westheimer Parkway, Katy, from MKT Distillery, chef and owner Brandon Whipple said. Eventually, Whipple hopes to open a brick-and-mortar store. The food truck offers a seasonal menu of crawfish, crab, shrimp and other Cajun comfort foods. 281-908-9584. www.facebook.com/cajuncomforts

17 Boudin Cafe relocated its food truck to a spot by Igloo Road and I-10 near Rooms To Go, which is located at 30701 West Miller Road, Ste. A, Brookshire, in January. It was previously located at the intersection of Jordan Ranch and Kingland boulevards in Brookshire. The business sells empanadas, jambalaya, voodoo tots and beignets. 346-269-7040. www.facebook.com/pages/category/Food-Truck/Boudin-Cafe-459629781214110/

RELOCATIONS

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CLOSINGS

19 Motherhood Maternity Outlet will close its Katy Mills mall location at 5000 Katy Mills Circle, Katy, by the end of March. Destination Maternity, which filed for bankruptcy Oct. 21, announced it would be closing stores as part of re-structuring, according to a news release. Destination Maternity is in the middle of a bidding process for a buyout and on Dec. 2 announced that global brand owner and marketer Marquee Brands had made an initial bid of about $50 million. Destination Maternity sells clothing and accessories for expecting mothers. Destination Maternity brand stores in Sugar Land, Rice Village and the Galleria area are also closing. 281-394-1542. www.motherhood.com

ANNIVERSARIES

18 Katy Community Fellowship, at 24102 Kingsland Blvd., Katy, celebrated its 20th anniversary with a snow hill, a petting zoo, bounce houses, face painting and food on Jan. 26. The church offers opportunities for community members to get involved, including events, gatherings and services. 281-391-0099. www.katyfellowship.com

WORTH THE TRIP

COMING SOON

Messina Hof Harvest Green Winery and Kitchen held a groundbreaking ceremony Jan. 17 at 8921 Harlem Road, Richmond. Construction is slated to take 10 to 12 months, and this marks the fourth location for Messina Hof. Upon completion, the winery will be the largest in southeast Texas, according to a press release. The location will host a tasting room, a wine bar, a restaurant and a covered patio.

“Our first brick-and-mortar presence in Houston will be on a grand scale,” Paul M. Bonarrigo of Messina Hof said in the release. 800-736-9463 (Bryan location). www.messinahof.com

Messina Hof Harvest Green Winery and Kitchen broke ground in Richmond.
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IMPACTS
Businesses that have recently opened or are coming soon, relocating or expanding

NOW OPEN

1 *El Habanero Mexican Grill* opened at 22635 Morton Ranch Road, Ste. 100, Katy, on Jan. 20. The Tex-Mex restaurant offers a variety of fajitas, rice and bean dishes, soups and chalupas as well as vegetarian options. 832-437-5463. www.elhabaneromexicangrill.com

2 *Corner 99* held a soft opening Jan. 24 at 1215 Grand West Blvd., Ste. C1, Katy. The Vietnamese restaurant offers traditional dishes such as pho and vermicelli as well as rice and noodle entrees. Appetizers also include egg rolls, spring rolls and Vietnamese-styled wings. It also serves a variety of craft beer selections. 832-321-3546. www.cor99.com

3 *Karma Kolache* held a grand opening in late 2019 for a new location at 23108 Cinco Ranch Blvd., Katy. The business offers doughnuts and kolaches stuffed with a variety of ingredients such as brisket, chorizo, eggs and potatoes. 281-392-7877. www.karmatastesgood.com

4 On Dec. 24, *Nawab's Kitchen* opened at 5205 S. Mason Road, Ste. 100, Katy, a location formerly occupied by Kabobish Cafe & Grill. Nawab's menu items are inspired by Indian and Pakistani cuisine, featuring grilled and barbecued items as well as curried meats and vegetables. 832-321-3268. www.nawabkitchen.com

5 *Demi Cruz Studio* opened in late 2019 at 1830 S. Mason Road, Ste. 110, Katy, owner Demi Cruz said. The boutique sells women's clothing such as jeans, body suits and dresses. It also provides makeup and styling services as well as a space for modeling and photos. 832-991-1254. www.demicruzstudio.com

6 *Reborn Med Spa*, also owned by Cruz, opened in late 2019 at 1830 S. Mason Road, Ste. 115, Katy. The business offers a variety of spa services, including facials, hair removal, massages and cellulite removal. Facials include jelly masks, hydra facials and chemical peels. 832-991-1253. www.facebook.com/rebornmedspa/

7 *Postal Plus Tax and Bookkeeping Services* at 2404 Greenhouse Road, Ste. D, Houston, opened Jan. 31. Business owner Hunaid “Sam” Qureshi has 20 years of tax experience and will offer his expertise as well as postal services. Services also include bookkeeping, accounting and other personal and professional financial services. 713-493-1720. www.postalplustaxandbookkeepingservices.com

8 *San Eatery* opened Feb. 5 at 6356 S. Peek Road, Ste. 600, Katy. The restaurant offers an Asian-Latin fusion menu with dishes such as red beans and garlic chicken. A website has not been created as of press time. 281-717-4134.

COMING SOON

9 *Taste Buds Cereal Bar* plans to open in April at 1801 N. Mason Road, Katy, said Courtney Thomas, who owns the business with his wife, Jazmin Thomas. The cereal bar will serve a menu of cereal, cereal-infused smoothies and cake as well as cereal strudel. The business will also host birthday party packages with customizable cereal bowls, a personalized cereal box and retro video games. The location does not have a phone number as of press time. www.tastebudscerealbar.com

10 *Haidilao* will open its first Texas location in early 2021 in a new building at Katy Grand's second phase, according to a press release. The first phase is located at 23330 Grand Circle Blvd. The restaurant specializes in Szechuan hot pot and also serves seafood and vegetable-based dishes. https://www.haidilao.com/sg/
At Mystery Island, we’ll uncover the truth about our Creator God! There’s a sea of confusion about who God is and what He’s like, so we’ll track down the one true God and learn how amazing He is through the pages of Scripture. Each day, kids will learn more about one of God’s amazing attributes and how that applies to their lives.

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FEBRUARY

21 THROUGH 23 ROCK OUT TO CURE CANCER
The second annual Tune Out Cancer Music Festival will have three days of live music, entertainers, vendors and food trucks at the Wildcatter Saloon. A variety of music styles will perform from country to rap to rock. The event benefits the Texas Children’s Hospital. 5 p.m.–2 a.m. (Feb. 21), 11 a.m.–2 a.m. (Feb. 22, Feb. 23). $30 (one-day admission), $50 (three-day admission). 26913 Katy Freeway, Katy. 832-799-2941. www.facebook.com/TexasChildrensTuneOutCancerMusicFest2020

22 RACE AGAINST CANCER
The third annual Reign Over Cancer Walk and 5K event will be held at Cane Island Welcome Center. After the race, there will be a party with food, drinks and activities for children. Proceeds go to the Katy-based GEST Foundation Inc., which provides emotional, spiritual and financial support to individuals with cancer and their families. 8-11:30 a.m. $25-$30 (per participant). 2100 Cane Island Parkway, Katy. 956-832-9188. www.gestfoundation.org

22 RUN FOR A CAUSE
Graeme’s Superheroes is hosting its fifth Graeme’s Run with a 5K and 1-mile family walk to raise money in honor of Graeme Bone, who died of a congenital heart defect in 2015 when he was 2 1/2 years old. Activities after the run and walk include bounce houses and live music. There will also be door prizes and raffles. The event’s proceeds go to The Children’s Heart Foundation. 8-11 a.m. $20-$40 (per participant). No Label Brewing Co., 5351 First St., Katy. 832-221-9116. www.graemessuperheroes.org

23 PLAY COWBOY AND COWGIRL
Westland Baptist Church is hosting a Western Day. The themed event will include family-friendly activities such as horse rides, a petting zoo, s’mores and a worship service. Attendees are encouraged to dress in their western gear. 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Free. 1407 W. Grand Parkway S., Katy. 281-392-5099. www.facebook.com/events/611730029664575

COURTESY PEDALING THE PRAIRIE

25 CELEBRATE MARDI GRAS
No Label Brewery Co. will host a Fat Tuesday celebration event benefiting Greenawalds Service Inc. This nonprofit’s mission is to end veteran suicide, help veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and rescue dogs. It plans to expand services to include a facility for training law enforcement dogs and educational outreach to prevent veteran homelessness. Event attendees can expect beads, beer and raffle items. 4-8 p.m. Free (admission). 5351 First St., Katy. 832-817-1180. www.facebook.com/events/131245224651614/

COURTESY NITHYA HARI

29 THROUGH MARCH 1 JOIN A CRAWFISH BOIL
TaD’s hosts its fourth annual crawfish boil. The Cajun’s restaurant’s event will include all-you-can-eat crawfish, beer and live music. There will be trailers, tents and a stage for a variety of music acts. Noon-9 p.m. (Feb. 29), noon-7 p.m. (March 4). Price TBD. 1425 FM 1463, Katy. 281-665-1149. www.facebook.com/events/1124096441130689

29 CELEBRATE TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY
The Texas Exes Katy Chapter will celebrate Texas Independence Day. University of Texas students, graduates and their friends are encouraged to attend to honor the university and the Lone Star State. The event will include Curbside Coonexan’s food truck, which serves Southern cuisine such as jambalaya and hot dogs. There will be a 2:30 p.m. toast to Texas. 2-5 p.m. Free. MKT Distillery, 5373 First St., Katy. 512-840-5700. www.facebook.com/events/1461085910733396

MARCH

01 LISTEN TO CLASSICAL MUSIC
The Lone Star Symphonic Band presents a show titled “God Bless Texas!”. The concert will include Texas- and Western-themed songs. 4-5:30 p.m. $7. Holy Covenant United Methodist Church, 22111 Morton Ranch Road, Katy. www.issb.org

06 THROUGH 08 SHOP FOR VINTAGE ITEMS
Vintage Market Days of Southwest Houston is hosting its 2020 spring market. The indoor shopping experience will showcase vendors with vintage goods, antiques and home decor. Food trucks will be available for grabbing a snack or meal. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. (March 6), 10 a.m.–5 p.m. (March 7), 10 a.m.–4 p.m. (March 8). Free (children 12 years and younger), $5-$10 (attendees 13 years and older). 5D Robinson Pavilion, 5801 Katy Hockley Cut-off Road, Katy. 936-900-5151. www.vintagemarketdays.com

07 CHECK OUT MUSCLE CARS
West Houston Muscle is hosting Musclepalooza at Typhoon Texas. Up to 300 vehicles can compete. 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Free (spectators), $25 (early entry competition fee), $40 (day-of competition fee). 555 Katy Fort Bend Road, Katy. 832-689-4891. www.facebook.com/events/340135390272459

11 THROUGH 15 WATCH COLLEGE BASKETBALL
College teams will compete at the Southland Conference basketball tournament at the Merrell Center. Eight men’s and eight women’s teams will play for the championship. Times vary. $20-$25 (admission). 6301 S. Stadium Lane, Katy. 281-396-2562. www.southland.org/tournaments/id=137

18 THROUGH APRIL 4 WATCH A HORSE SHOW
The Great Southwest Equestrian Center will host the 75th annual Pin Oak Charity Horse Show. Equestrians will compete in various disciplines. There will be a vendor market to shop at. Proceeds from the event benefit the Texas Children’s Hospital. Multiple times. Free (admission). 2501 S. Mason Road, Ste. 100, Katy. 281-578-7669. www.pinoak.org

Find more or submit Katy events at communityimpact.com/event-calendar. Event organizers can submit local events online to be considered for the print edition. Submitting details for consideration does not guarantee publication.
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City of Fulshear examines public transit options

BY JEN PARA

The city of Fulshear has begun a study to examine public transportation options.

“It’s a first [look] at where people are, where they need to go and how they’re getting there,” Fulshear Economic Development Director Angela Fritz said at a Jan. 30 public meeting about the study.

Fulshear residents are encouraged to submit comments, suggestions and ideas by March 1.

The study team—Fulshear and Fort Bend County Public Transportation as well as consultants WSP and The Lentz Group—will review the feedback, develop transit concepts and create a plan to present to the city, county and residents.

A second public meeting will be held in the spring to review the transit options, and a final plan will be presented in the summer. No projects will be funded or pursued until the city chooses to do so.

The $140,000 public transit study is managed by FBCPT, which received grant money from the Federal Transit Authority and the Texas Department of Transportation to fund the study, Director Perri D’Armond and Assistant Director Yvette Maldonado of FBCPT said.

The only existing public transit service available to Fulshear residents is FBCPT’s demand-response service, according to a presentation by FBCPT. In this service, residents can prebook $1 rides throughout the county.

FBCPT has bus routes from park and rides in Rosenberg and Sugar Land to the Texas Medical Center, Galleria area and Greenway area and back. It also offers a bus route to and from Richmond and Rosenberg.

Survey says

Fulshear conducted a transit survey, which received 265 resident responses.

53% Interested in an express bus service from Fulshear to Houston

18% Interested in a local bus service within Fulshear

4,117 Annual demand-response bus trips from Fort Bend County Transit in Fulshear in 2019.

SOURCES: CITY OF FULSHEAR, FORT BEND COUNTY COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

Have your voice heard

Submit public comments by March 1 via email to transit@fortbendcountytx.gov or by mail to 301 Jackson St., Richmond, TX 77469.

UPCOMING PROJECTS

Cane Island Parkway widening
Fort Bend County plans to widen Cane Island Parkway between I-10 to FM 1463, county Assistant Engineer Ike Akinwande said. The project entails widening the two-lane road into a four-lane road with a median.

Timeline: March 2020-first quarter 2021
Cost: $6.3 million
Funding source: Fort Bend County

Greenbusch Road widening
Fort Bend County will widen Greenbusch Road between Westheimer Parkway and Gaston Road from a two-lane road to a four-lane road with a median, Akinwande said.

Timeline: Third quarter 2020-third quarter 2021
Cost: $7.4 million
Funding source: Fort Bend County

Cinco Ranch Boulevard turn lanes
Fort Bend County will build new right turn lanes at the intersection of Cinco Ranch Boulevard and the Grand Parkway, Akinwande said.

Timeline: Third quarter 2020-fourth quarter 2020
Cost: $1 million
Funding sources: Fort Bend County, Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District 12

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COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER • COMMUNITYIMPACT.COM
Trendmaker Homes developing new neighborhood near Westpark Tollway

BY JEN PARA

Trendmaker Homes plans to open Haven at Seven Lakes, a single-family home community with 131 homes across 38 acres, according to a Jan. 16 press release.

Located near the intersection of the Westpark Tollway and Katy Gaston Road, the gated community will begin preselling when the model homes are completed around September, Christine Rombouts said in an email on behalf of Trendmaker Homes.

Haven at Seven Lakes will offer homes ranging between 2,000-3,000 square feet on 40- and 50-foot homesites, per the release. Homebuyers will be able to choose from customizable floor plans.

Land Tejas to build 3,000-home community

BY JEN PARA

The Katy area will soon welcome several thousand more single-family homes.

Land Tejas closed on a roughly 1,039-acre parcel in late 2019 and plans to build a master-planned community with about 3,000 homes, according to a Jan. 17 press release. The community is located in Harris and Waller counties, and homesites are expected to be delivered in 2021.

Land Tejas has not announced a name for the community, nor has it settled on a firm site plan with lot sizes, price ranges or amenities, Haunani Shipper said in an email on behalf of Land Tejas.

CBA Land Capital LP is an equity partner with Land Tejas in the land purchase, and Trez Capital is providing the financing, per the release.

Neither financial terms nor development costs were provided.

The 1,039-acre property has a 2019 market value of about $16.7 million, according to the Harris and Waller county appraisal districts.

Neighborhood numbers

Trendmaker Homes began infrastructure construction in December and anticipates lot delivery this spring.

**Number of homes:** 131  
**Square footage:** 2,000-3,000  
**Home prices:** mid-$300,000s  
**Schools:** Wilson Elementary School, Seven Lakes Junior High School, and Seven Lakes High School in Katy ISD  
**Amenities:** gated entrance, 4-acre lake, park, pavilion and trails

**Sources:** TRENDMAKER HOMES, KATY ISD/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

Cross Creek Ranch Welcome Center  
6450 Cross Creek Bend Lane • Fulshear, TX 77441
District forming bond committee

BY JEN PARA

The board of trustees took one of the first steps for proposing a Katy ISD bond referendum this year.

The board approved the creation of a 2020 community bond advisory committee and its charter in a 6-0 vote at the Jan. 20 regular meeting. Board member Susan Gesoff was absent.

The committee will comprise about 150 community members who reside within the district’s geographical boundary, KISD Chief of Communications Andrea Grooms said in a presentation to the board at the Jan. 20 meeting.

The 2014 and 2017 voter-approved bonds also had 150-member bond committees to craft the packages, Grooms said.

Katy ISD board of trustees approves salary increase for Superintendent Ken Gregorski

BY JEN PARA

After a year as the leader of the district, Katy ISD Superintendent Ken Gregorski has received a raise.

The committee will meet between April and August to determine whether the district should call for a bond referendum and, if so, which projects should be included, she said.

During the Jan. 20 meeting, Grooms and Assistant Superintendent of Operations Ted Vierling presented enrollment numbers to show how the northwest quadrant of the district will grow faster than existing campuses can handle.

For example, without a bond to build a 10th high school, Paetow High School could see an enrollment of 7,258 by 2029, Vierling said.

At the beginning of the school year, KISD had 81,718 students. A December demographic update projected KISD’s enrollment could grow to a number between 101,428 and 108,235 by 2029.

Construction contracts

The Katy ISD trustees approved construction contracts at the Jan. 20 regular board meeting.

- **Junior High School No. 17, $52.4M**: The Drymalla Construction Co. Inc. will build the new school. Construction is expected to begin in February and open fall 2021. Funding comes from the 2017 voter-approved bond.
- **Flooring replacements, $2.1M**: Exley, Franz and Rhoads elementary schools; Beckendorff Junior High School; and the Support Services Complex will receive new flooring. Funding comes from the 2017 voter-approved bond.
- **Barn renovations, $2.6M**: Seven barns at the Young Agricultural Facility will be upgraded. Funding comes from 2017 bond savings.
- **Mayde Creek High School upgrades, $625,556**: This campus will receive additional security cameras, new signs and new tennis court lights. Funding comes from 2017 bond savings and the 2014 bond.
Katy City Council approves installing 22 license plate readers around community’s busy areas

BY NOLA Z. VALENTE

CITY OF KATY The city of Katy will soon have an added layer of security. Katy City Council authorized the Katy Police Department to add 22 license plate readers around the Katy Mills business district and inside some neighborhoods where the department gets the most calls for service, Katy police Chief Noe Diaz said at the Jan. 27 regular council meeting.

The cameras will be installed within four to six weeks, he said.

“As the city grows, we are trying to get ahead of the growth,” Diaz said. “Essentially we are adding 22 police officers. They will be physically posted, and it is 24 hours of security. ... They are here to add clues to our detectives.”

One camera installed on Katy Mills Drive has enabled the police department to count 15,906 vehicles driving through the city over one weekend, Diaz said.

“I understand that this brings so much value to the department that you are willing to forgo one of your budgeted officers to get this system in place,” Council Member Janet Corte said to Diaz at the Jan. 27 meeting. Diaz agreed and added this was a monumental step for the police department, which would additionally be enabled to track traffic trends for future infrastructure plans.

Each camera will cost $2,000 per year, said Joshua Miller, who works for the department, which would additionally be enabled to track traffic trends for future infrastructure plans.

The cost includes maintenance, installation, cloud services and solar panels. The existing reader is a prototype and did not cost anything to install.

Fulshear OKs new irrigation meter rates

BY NOLA Z. VALENTE

CITY OF FULLSHEAR Fulshear City Council voted to amend the city’s water rates Jan. 21.

The amendment will have irrigation meter users billed $0 if consumption is shown to be less than 1,000 gallons by meter readings.

Residents typically install irrigation meters to save money because they are not connected to the sewer, Fulshear City Manager Jack Harper said.

But several residents complained they were still paying too much for their water usage after council approved new rates in October.

Resident Jeniffer Hickman said she had an irrigation meter installed for $605, expecting to save money, but she said she has yet to make up for what she paid for the installment.

Harris County sues after Gessner explosion

BY SHAWN ARRAJJ

HARRIS COUNTY The Harris County Attorney’s Office filed a lawsuit Jan. 30 against Watson Grinding and Manufacturing, the company behind an explosion on Jan. 24 that killed two people and damaged about 450 homes.

Watson Grinding and Manufacturing experienced an explosion Jan. 30.

Harris County alleges Watson Grinding and Manufacturing, the company behind an explosion on Jan. 24 that killed two people and damaged about 450 homes.

“Watson’s use of propylene was an ultra-hazardous activity and the company failed to exercise its duty of care to protect the public, particularly when the facility is located in a neighborhood,” Ryan said.

Harris County alleges Watson Grinding and Manufacturing violated the Texas Clean Air Act, including by conducting outdoor burning without a permit, discharging air contaminants in a way that could adversely affect humans.
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Drama

Drama Kids International
Dates: June 22-26, July 20-24 and Aug. 3-7.
Cost: $150 (half day), $250 (full day)
Cinco Ranch Lake House 25202 Springwood Lake Drive, Katy 832-829-2287
www.dramakids.com/katy-westhouston-cinco-ranch-fullshear-tx/
At this camp, children will learn public speaking and other life skills through drama-related activities including singing, dancing, directing, acting and designing sets and costumes. Each week has a different theme. Ages 5-15.

Day

Camp West
Dates: June 15-19, June 22-26, July 6-10, July 13-17 (weekly)
Cost: $275 with extra fees for early drop-off and late pickup.Sibling and early bird discounts available.
Faith West Academy 2225 Porter Road, Katy 281-391-5683
www.campwest.org
Children in kindergarten through second grade will participate in scavenger hunts, fishing, arts and crafts, rock wall and indoor and outdoor games. Older elementary students will work on team-building activities, indoor games and outdoor activities as well as arts and crafts. Participants in junior high will include archery, paintball, woodworking, rock climbing, cardboard boat races fishing as well as ziplining. Ages 5-7.

Languages

Bonjour & Bienvenue French
Cultural Center
Dates: TBD
Cost: $265-$305 (full day), $165-$195 (half day)
1319 Circle Lake Drive, Katy 832-707-5203
www.frenchhubhouston.com
Children will learn French while learning about French culture and traditions through lessons, cooking, arts and crafts as well as coding.
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2020 SUMMER CAMPS

At Spanish Schoolhouse, children will be immersed in the Spanish language and culture by learning vocabulary, water activities, arts and crafts, science, cooking and sports. Puppet shows are another activity the camp puts on. Ages 3-8.

Sports

American Kids Athletics
Sports Camp
Dates: May 25-Aug. 19
Cost: $195
3211 N. Fry Road, Katy
281-492-2411
www.akasportscamp.com

At its 10,000-square-foot facility with more than 2 acres of outdoor play areas, AKA Sports Camp takes children on three to four field trips per week, with at least one in-house day to participate in games, arts and crafts as well as sports. Field trip destinations include Texas Typhoon Waterpark and movie theaters. Activities also include arts and crafts. Ages 5-13.

Momentum Indoor Climbing
Dates: May 26-Aug. 14
Cost: $240-$320
25410 Katy Mills Parkway, Katy
832-437-9091
www.momentumclimbing.com/katy/

The 36,000-square-foot climbing school’s instructors will provide hands-on climbing training, activities and games. Ages 4-16.

Spanish Schoolhouse
Dates: June 1-July 31 (weekly)
Cost: TBD
2944 S. Mason Road, Ste. L, Katy
832-437-0570
www.spanshschoolhouse.com/katy

At Spanish Schoolhouse, children will be immersed in the Spanish language and culture by learning vocabulary, water activities, arts and crafts, science, cooking and sports. Puppet shows are another activity the camp puts on. Ages 3-8.

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GUIDE
Candidates and information for the March primaries

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- Feb. 21: last day to apply for early voting by mail
- Feb. 28: last day of early voting
- March 3: primary election day
- Voters can vote in the Republican or Democratic primary, but not both.

Follow along for election night coverage at communityimpact.com.

### WHERE TO VOTE
- Precincts: A voter is registered in the county election precinct that contains the voter’s residence address. Each election precinct established for an election shall be served by a single polling place located within the boundary of the precinct.
- Where can I vote?: Voters in Harris and Fort Bend counties can vote at any voting center on election day and early voting. In Waller County, voters can vote at any voting center only during early voting.

Visit communityimpact.com to see a full list and map of where to vote during early voting and on election day.

### SAMPLE BALLOT

#### FEDERAL

**U.S. president**
- R: Roque “Rocky” De La Fuente Guerra**
- R: Bob Ely
- R: Zoltan G. Istvan
- R: Matthew John Matern
- R: Donald J. Trump*
- R: Joe Walsh
- R: Bill Weld
- D: Michael Bennet
- D: Joseph R. Biden
- D: Michael R. Bloomberg
- D: Cory Booker
- D: Pete Buttigieg
- D: Julián Castro
- D: Roque “Rocky” De La Fuente
- D: John K. Delaney
- D: Tulsi Gabbard
- D: Amy Klobuchar
- D: Deval Patrick
- D: Bernie Sanders
- D: Tom Steyer
- D: Elizabeth Warren
- D: Robby Wells
- D: Marianne Williamson
- D: Andrew Yang

**Railroad commissioner**
- R: Ryan Sitton*
- D: James "Jim" Wright
- R: Roberto R. "Beto" Alonzo
- D: Chrysta Castaneda
- D: Kelly Stone
- D: Mark Watson

#### DISTRICT

**U.S. House District 7**
- R: Maria Espinoza
- R: Wesley Hunt
- R: Jim Noteware
- R: Kyle Preston
- R: LaChe Rehman
- D: Cindy Siegel
- D: Lizzie Fletcher*

**U.S. House District 10**
- R: Michael McCaul*
- R: Pritesh Gandhi
- D: Shannon Hutcheson
- D: Mike Siegel

**U.S. House District 22**
- R: Pierce Bush
- R: Jon Camarillo
- R: Douglas Haggard
- R: Aaron Hermes
- R: Greg Hill
- D: Matt Hinton
- R: Dan Mathews
- R: Diana Miller
- R: Troy Nehls
- R: Brandon T. Penko
- R: Shandon Phan

**Fort Bend County constable Precinct 3**
- R: Robert Becker
- R: Chad Norvell
- R: Jesse Zamarripa
- D: Mo Nehad
- D: Patrick Quincy

**Fort Bend County commissioner Precinct 3**
- R: Wendy Duncan
- R: Glenn “Harry” Gustafson
- R: W.A. “Andy” Meyers*
- D: Hope Martin

**Fort Bend County sheriff**
- R: John Minchew
- R: Trever J. Nehls
- R: Siddiqi Muzaffar
- D: Eric Fagan
- D: Genuine Hughes
- D: Captain Holland Jones

**Fort Bend County tax assessor-collector**
- R: Phillip Andrews
- R: J.J. Clemence
- R: Jaison Joseph
- R: James Pressler
- D: Neeta Sane
- D: Carmen Turner

**Harris County attorney**
- R: John Nation
- D: Christian Dashaun Menefee
- D: Ben Rose
- D: Vince Ryan*

**Harris County commissioner Precinct 3**
- R: Tom Ramsey
- R: Susan Sample
- D: Brenda Stardig

**Harris County constable Precinct 5**
- R: Ted Heap*
- D: Mark Alan Harrison
- D: Mark Miller
- D: Randy Newman

**Harris County district attorney**
- R: Lloyd Wayne Oliver
- R: Mary Huffman
- R: Lori Deangelo
- D: Carvana Cloud
- D: Audia Jones
- D: Kim Ogg*
- D: Todd Overstreet

**Harris County sheriff**
- R: Joe Danna
- R: Paul Day
- R: Randy Rush
- D: Ed Gonzalez*
- D: Jerome Moore
- D: Harry Zamora

**Harris County tax assessor-collector**
- R: Chris Daniel
- D: Ann Harris Bennett*
- D: Jolanda “Jo” Jones
- D: Jack Terence

**Waller County Sheriff**
- R: Troy Guidry
- D: Dan Porter
- R: R. Glenn Smith*
- D: Cedric D. Watson

---

**NOTES:**
- R: Republican
- D: Democrat
- *Incumbent
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Jazzy Junk Resale Shop

Katy store sells used, repurposed furniture for home decor, craft projects

Gloria Bryant and her youngest son, Billy Ray Bryant Jr., decided to team up to open a resale furniture store in the city of Katy, Gloria said.

The store opened on Franz Street in September 2015, but four months later, Billy Ray unexpectedly died, she said.

“It was me and my baby boy, Billy Ray,” she said. “I asked him if he wanted to open up a resale shop, do furniture and paint stuff. … [It] was just something fun I was starting with my son, and then that happened.”

Gloria’s oldest son, Daniel Bryant, stepped up to help his mother run the store, they said. She goes to antique stores, flea markets and estate sales for their inventory, while he oversees the day-to-day operations of Jazzy Junk.

Together, the mother-son duo has cultivated a store—which has expanded three times—filled with antique and vintage accessories and furniture as well as purses and jewelry, Gloria and Daniel said.

Some furniture pieces they repaint, distress and resell, and often customers purchase items for their own craft projects, they said.

For example, many customers purchase metal bed springs, string lights through the wires and hang the finished project on a patio, Gloria said.

Old windows and frames are popular items to repurpose for pictures and wreaths, she added. One item for sale inside Jazzy Junk includes a table Daniel made from window frames and an old sewing machine base.

“I love when customers come in and say, ‘I bought this from you, and this is what I did to it,’ and they’ll show me photos of repurposing stuff,” Gloria said. “It’s just so fabulous. You just can’t imagine what some people do with some of this stuff.”

Daniel cited their friendly customer service and reasonable prices for their success over the past five years.

“We thank God every day, and we appreciate our customers,” Gloria added.
“Cancer, I found hope here”
Emily Dumler | Cancer Survivor

Emily Dumler beat lymphoma with help from an innovative clinical trial at MD Anderson Cancer Center, the only hospital in Houston solely focused on ending cancer. We offer access to more than 1,250 clinical trials – many only available here – to provide our patients with groundbreaking treatment options and the best hope of defeating cancer.

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The Traveling Carrot
Raw vegan food truck finds home in Katy area

Valeta Renee Herndon, also known as Chef Renee, took her favorite vegan recipes and opened a food truck called The Traveling Carrot. She runs her business alongside her daughter, Sydnei Herndon, and they welcome walk-ups on weekends.

“The closer a diet is to raw [and] plant-based, the more changes you will see in your body and the better you will feel,” Valeta said.

Valeta offers raw vegan items that are never cooked to retain more nutritional value but are sometimes dehydrated to accomplish a firmer texture.

On weekdays, Valeta said she only accepts online orders so that she can volunteer with her church by teaching the Bible.

The Traveling Carrot’s menu offers a variety of meals—such as nachos, pizza, veggie fajita salad and mock tuna rolls—all made with fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and sprouted grains.

Valeta said she discovered the vegan lifestyle in 2007 and opened The Traveling Carrot in 2017.

“The meals on my menu are my favorite meals that I have eaten for years,” she said. “I encourage everyone to give raw vegan meals a try and see the difference it makes in your mind, body and spirit.”

The Traveling Carrot is frequented by strict raw vegans, transitioning vegans and curious carnivores, Valeta said.

Valeta said she would consider working out of a brick-and-mortar space, but it would be designed to be a grab-and-go establishment.

“I’ve never wanted the stress of operating a sit-down restaurant,” Valeta said. “Working out of a food trailer helps me to keep costs down, stay focused on what’s most important and to live a simple life.”

**The Traveling Carrot**
3427 N. Fry Road, Katy
www.thetravelingcarrot.com
Hours: Fri.-Sat. 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Sun. 1-5:30 p.m., closed Mon.-Thu.
The Traveling Carrot has a 24/7 online order system operating but is closed to walk-ups on weekdays.

**BECOMING VEGAN**
Valeta said consuming enough protein is a concern many have when transitioning to a plant-based diet. It is easy for a vegan diet to meet the recommendations for protein as nearly all vegetables, beans, grains, nuts and seeds contain it, she said.

**Daily protein recommendations:**
- Children ages 2-8 years: 2-4 ounces
- Children and adults age 9 and older: 5-6.5 ounces

1 ounce of protein can be found in:
- 12 almonds
- 24 pistachios
- 7 walnut halves
- 1 tablespoon of peanut or almond butter
- 1 cup of split pea soup
- 1/2 cup of lentil soup
- 1/4 cup of cooked beans
- 2 tablespoons of hummus
- 1/2 cup of tofu
- 1.5 egg whites
- 3 egg yolks
- 1/4 cup of cooked peas

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER
Real estate recovery

Homes within the reservoir flood pools are selling, but the market has not recovered to pre-Harvey levels in some neighborhoods.

SOURCES: ALAINA ROGERS OF SPARROW REALTY, HOUSTON ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

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**Court finds Corps responsible for Harvey flooding**

Second trial to determine damages to Katy-area properties will be held in November

**BY JEN PARA**

A few days after Hurricane Harvey, Elisio Soares was paddling in a kayak to reach his home at Cinco Ranch Equestrian Village.

“It was bad,” he said. “The water had drained out of the home, but everything was wet. ... It smelled like sewage. I could see mold growing.”

He estimated his home took on about 8 inches of contaminated water, and he spent thousands in repairs.

Although his home is not in a flood zone, it is in the Barker Reservoir’s flood pool, an area of land that stores stormwater during major rain events, he said. Soares said he did not know his property was in this flood pool when he purchased it in 2001.

He joined a lawsuit alleging the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District unlawfully flooded 10,000 private properties upstream of the Addicks and Barker reservoirs in the days after Hurricane Harvey.

After a trial, Senior Judge Charles Lettow of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims issued an opinion and order Dec. 17, concluding the Corps’ actions are liable and the upstream property owners are eligible to receive compensation.

The lawsuit will continue with another trial in November to determine damages, according to the team of lawyers representing the flooded property owners. The total financial outcome for property owners could be $1 billion to $5 billion, and the thousands of upstream property owners have until August 2023 to join the lawsuit.

As these property owners wait for compensation, the residential real estate market is rebounding, local Realtors said.

“There are people who won’t ever buy in these neighborhoods because of the flooding,” said Tim Sojka, a local Realtor with See Tim Sell Property Group. “But they’ve recovered much better than I expected.”

**The arguments**

The Barker and Addicks reservoirs were built in the 1940s to help prevent the flooding of downtown Houston. During Hurricane Harvey, the Corps closed the reservoirs’ gates to impound water within the dam as instructed by 2012 operational guidelines, Lettow wrote.

The reservoirs captured about 140 billion gallons of water from the storm, according to previous Community Impact Newspaper reporting. The Corps began releasing impounded water Aug. 28, 2017.

“These dams are actually designed to do exactly what they did during Harvey,” said attorney Charles Irvine, part of the team representing the property owners. “Every time it rains, these dams impound water; the [Corps] close the gates so the water doesn’t flow downstream and flood downtown Houston.”

The Corps’ operations prevented about $7 billion in projected losses in downtown Houston, Lettow wrote. However, by impounding the stormwater behind the reservoir gates, the Corps’ operations flooded private properties upstream.

The lawsuit used 13 test properties, including Soares’, to represent the thousands of upstream properties that flooded to determine whether the government took private property without just compensation, violating the Fifth Amendment of U.S. Constitution, when operating the Addicks and Barker reservoirs during Hurricane Harvey to impound stormwater, Irvine said.

Community Impact Newspaper reached out to the U.S. Department of Justice, but it declined to comment.

One of the arguments Irvine team used was the government did not purchase enough property to store 100% of what is called the maximum design flood pool—or the maximum amount of water that may need to be stored on government-owned land during a major rain event.

Lettow decided the government unlawfully took the private property because it knowingly did not purchase enough property to store impounded water and has no plan to change the operation of the reservoirs.

**The result**

The government did not purchase the entirety of the maximum design pool because the Corps cannot afford to pursue projects designed to the worst-case scenarios, Lettow wrote of the defense’s argument.

And as the Greater Houston area grew westward, private developers began building on land within the reservoirs’ flood pool that was not owned by the Corps, Irvine said.

Local governments oversee development regulations in the Katy area. Harris and Fort Bend county officials previously told Community Impact Newspaper that they cannot outright prohibit building on private property.

Lettow’s opinion said Harris and Fort Bend counties knew subdivisions were being constructed within the maximum design flood pool of the Barker Reservoir but did not do enough to inform property owners.

“It is undisputed that [the property owners] did not know their properties were located within the reservoirs and subject to attendant government-induced flooding,” he wrote.

However, receiving compensation will not come immediately, Irvine said. The second phase of the lawsuit to determine damages has just begun. And once the judge issues another opinion and order, the government will likely appeal the judge’s decisions.
Irvine said he could not provide any timeline for when property owners could receive compensation; there are too many uncontrollable factors.

Irvine said he and his team plan to file a class-action lawsuit so the 10,000 owners of the upstream properties flooded by the reservoirs can opt in and receive compensation.

The effect

Even if the upstream property owners are compensated, they could be flooded again, Soares said. He wants a permanent solution to mitigate flooding and improve drainage on the eastern side of the Katy area.

“It’s nice to be reimbursed, but it doesn’t fix the situation,” he said. “What if another Harvey happens?”

The Corps is conducting a $6 million study to research and recommend projects for federal funding to address the flooding risk along Buffalo Bayou, which includes the reservoirs. This study will not be complete until October 2021, per a May presentation. Any projects presented cannot begin until Congress appropriates funds, which could take years.

Regional solutions to mitigate flooding upstream of the reservoirs include constructing a flood tunnel, containing the Cypress Creek watershed and building additional detention and retention ponds, said Wendy Duncan, a Willow Fork Drainage District director, the co-founder of Barker Flood Prevention Advocacy Group and a candidate for the Fort Bend County Precinct 3 commissioner Republican primary.

Harris and Fort Bend counties are working on home buyout programs with federal grants. Although it may be the easiest and least expensive solution for the properties that are upstream and downstream of the reservoirs, Duncan said home buyouts in these areas should be used sparingly.

“Think about how many people [we’d be] displacing all at one time and what that will do to our real estate market,” Duncan said. “Can we find homes with that many people all at one time? And what does that do to the taxing base?”

Brad Evans, a local Realtor with the Houston Properties Team, said a government buyout should only be considered if homes have been flooded multiple times.

“There’s real appreciation in [the residential real estate area upstream of the reservoirs],” he said. “It’s just a matter of time…. Time to let the market take its course.”

Existing property owners who want to sell their property now—such as Soares, who moved out of state for a job opportunity and placed his home on the market in late 2019—must disclose the parcel is located within the flood pool due to a new law, Senate Bill 339, which became effective Sept. 1, Irvine said.

At a Jan. 12 community meeting held by Irvine and his team, many property owners in attendance expressed concerns that this new law will make it difficult to sell their property.

However, Evans and Sojka said neighborhoods located within the upstream flood pool of the reservoirs are recovering from the 2017 storm.

For example, in Canyon Gate the number of homes sold increased from 38 homes in 2016 to 59 homes in 2017 and to 63 homes in 2018, according to Houston Association of Realtors data. And in Mayde Creek Farms, the number of homes sold in 2016 was 10, which increased to 21 homes in 2017 and another 21 homes sold in 2018.

However, it is taking longer to sell homes, and home prices have not recovered in every neighborhood upstream of the reservoirs. In Canyon Gate, the median price of homes sold in 2018 was $199,000, about $38,000 less than the 2016 price of $257,750. But in Mayde Creek Farms, the median price of homes sold has increased from $149,000 in 2016 to $162,473 in 2018.

“There are challenges to selling these homes, but they’re still selling,” Sojka said. “And the further we move away from Harvey, the less important it will be to live away from the reservoirs. We have short memories.”

For more information, visit communityimpact.com.
SUCCESS: IF THE PRICE IS RIGHT

One factor influencing the success of restaurants in the Katy area is rent prices. Below are average rent prices per square foot per year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rental price per square foot</th>
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<th>$25-$35</th>
<th>&gt; $35</th>
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Experts said undercapitalization and an inability to afford rent are often factors leading to restaurant closures. Below are 17 restaurants that closed in 2019.

Experts said undercapitalization and an inability to afford rent are often factors leading to restaurant closures. Below are 17 restaurants that closed in 2019.

Meeting demographic changes

Restaurant owners are trying to survive competition in the Katy area, and experts said many are not open more than a few months due to demographic changes, rent prices and operational deficiencies.

U.S. sources widely differ on data, but about 15%-20% of restaurants do not survive their first year, which is in line with small-business failure across all industries, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

“The turnover in the restaurant business in the Katy area is a bit higher because it has had a lot of growth,” said David Littwitz, the president of Houston site selection company Littwitz Investments Inc. “People read about how things are wonderful in Katy, and it attracts new business owners. Sometimes they don’t do their homework, so you get more turnover.”

Owner of Astor Farm to Table, Casey Castro first opened his restaurant in December 2014 as Argentina Café. Castro rebranded it as Astor Café Bar & Grill within a year and finally to Astor Farm to Table, located at 1520 S. Mason Road, in April 2019.

“We were an Argentinian restaurant, but I don’t think that appealed to the community,” Castro said. “Katy is very global. Bringing the South African and Venezuelan cuisine changed everything. Now we are getting people from everywhere. It was the best decision that I ever made.”

A Mediterranean eatery called Kabobish Café & Grill opened in January 2019 at 5205 S. Mason Road, Katy. Co-owner Rahul Singh said he recognized the growing Pakistani and Indian population then changed the restaurant’s concept to adapt and increase sales. By January 2020, the restaurant was newly named Nawab’s Kitchen Indo-Pak Cuisine.

Andrew Leeper, an administrator and member of the Facebook Fort Bend Foodies group, said Katy is a destination for many cultures, and one of the best

CONTINUED FROM 1
lease is less than $3,000 [on Mason Road] and I can find something I could afford, “ he said. “Most other locations start their leases at $8,000 and go up. My brokerages, the annual rate per square foot ranges from $21-$25 in Mason Park to as high as $33-$45 in Katy Asian Town.

Katsabas, who has leased a space for Snappy’s for nearly two decades, said he estimates the average base rent to be $4-$7 per square foot per year in the city of Katy. Loopnet shows a range of $8-18.

Experts said high visibility means high rent prices in places such as the intersection of I-10 and Grand Parkway, where businesses are exposed to about 200,000 vehicles per day. Castro said as a small-business owner, he had to do everything himself with limited finances. “I was looking all around Katy to see if I could find something I could afford,” he said. “Most other locations start their leases at $8,000 and go up. My lease is less than $3,000 [on Mason Road] and I can balance my budget a lot better than if I had a $10,000 lease.”

Astor Farm to Table was a medical office when Castro bought it. “Choosing this location did have to do a lot with financing because I didn’t have all the money I needed to go and get a better place,” he said. “Maybe in the future, when we have created that demand and have consistency, we will be able to find something better.”

Price and location

Experts said high visibility means high rent prices. 

But in Katy, locals can compete with chain restaurants as long as they offer good food and good service, Littwitz said. “You know what you are getting when you walk in an Applebee’s or Chili’s,” he said. “The question for a local is what can they do to offer customers something the chain restaurant can’t give. Personalized service, better food [or] a wider and adventurous menu.”

Scott Taylor, a University of Houston restaurant expert, agreed. “A lot of consumers will say, ‘Food was OK, but the service was excellent. I’ll definitely go back,’ but rarely will consumers say, ‘Food was great, but service was terrible. Can’t wait to return,’” Taylor said. “Bad service will ruin good food every time.”

At Astor Farm to Table, Castro said socializing with customers is one reason for his success. “We are a little old school in the way people come in,” Castro said. “My customers get to know me, and they want to sit down with me to have a conversation, talk about family. ... Ninety-nine percent of my customers appreciate when I answer questions and just ask them about their daily lives.”

Katsabas shares the same idea for success. “When you open something new here in Katy, people are going to come in to try you out,” he said. “It’s up to you if you can keep them coming back. You can’t cut corners with the quality of the food”

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REAL ESTATE

Featured Neighborhood

WILLIAMSBURG PARISH, 77493

Williamsburg Parish is a short drive from Legacy and Rhodes stadiums, Katy Mills, Memorial Herman Katy Hospital and Katy Asian Town.

- Median home value: $220,995
- Homes on the market*: 9
- Homes under contract*: 5
- Median annual property taxes: $5,275.67
- Median price per square foot: $103.20
- Average days on the market*: 46

* AS OF 2/1/20

NEIGHBORHOOD DATA PROVIDED BY SEE TIM SELL LLC, TIM SOJKA
KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY • 713-822-2152
WWW.SEETIMSELL.COM

MARKET DATA FOR JANUARY

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MEDIAN PRICE OF HOMES SOLD

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See TIM Sell
Conditions Apply

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- playground
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Katy Park
- 100 acres
- soccer fields
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- 3/4-mile trail

SOURCE: HARRIS COUNTY/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

NEIGHBORHOOD DATA PROVIDED BY SEE TIM SELL LLC, TIM SOJKA
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Mason Creek South Hike and Bike Trail is home to wildlife.
DEALS THIS MONTH

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1200 N Grand Parkway E
PASADENA
4637 E Sam Houston Pkwy S
WALLISVILLE
6125 E Sam Houston Pkwy N

PELHAM
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