

HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL



Terry earns first playoff win in five years; see Sports

WHY SO MUCH SHOPPING ONLINE? SEE AMAZON, EBAY PURCHASES, PAGE 2A

How much gas does tiny city of Kendleton need?

City credit card purchases reveal thousands of dollars spent yearly at convenience stores, gas stations

BY SCOTT REESE WILLEY swilley@fbherald.com

The tiny community of Kendleton is only one square mile. It takes only a minute or two to pass through town in either direction of travel.

Yet city credit card statements revealed that the city spent thousands of dollars yearly over the past three years at convenience stores and gas stations.

City-issued credit cards were swiped dozens of times over the past 42 months at area fueling stations, costing taxpayers \$10,584.61. (See list, Page 3A).

Certainly, the city vehicles — trucks and tractors — will need fuel, but the city also contracts with the Fort Bend County Road & Bridge Department to use its fuel depot.

Indeed, the county bills the city regularly.

For instance, the county sent the city a bill for \$1,170 on Sept. 13, 2022.

Yet Mayor Darryl Humphrey Sr. visited gas stations weekly and sometimes daily from Sept. 2019 to February 2023.

A card issued to City Secretary Christina Flores also was used at gas stations and convenience stores during that time period.

A "Nameless Card" was also used at fueling stations and convenience stores in the area.

Despite being able to purchase fuel at the county depot, in September 2022, Humphrey used his city-issued credit card to purchase \$27.37 at Sunoco in Rosenberg and \$43.70 at Circle K in Richmond.



SECOND STORY OF A MULTI-PART SERIES



phrey used his city-issued credit card to purchase \$27.37 at Sunoco in Rosenberg and \$43.70 at Circle K in Richmond.

Or did he? The credit card statements did not come with cash register receipts that show exactly what was purchased and at what time of day.

The Herald has filed another Texas

Public Information Act request for the accompanying receipts.

In April, The Herald filed a TPIA request for all credit card statements for the past 10 years.

The city provided only 42 months of statements, saying that is all it had in its possession.

The credit card statements revealed that \$116,085.39 in purchases were made with the four city-issued credit cards over that time period.

No doubt, many of the purchases were for legitimate city business.

For instance, many of the cards were charged for fax services, computer software rental, and office supplies and equipment.

Yet, tens of thousands of dollars were spent on trips to restaurants, visits to convenience stores, and shopping at grocery and department stores.

A review of the credit card statements reveals:

- \$12,957.17 was spent at grocery, department stores and thrift stores.
\$6,627.54 was spent dining out.
\$11,860.54 was spent shopping on eBay and Amazon.
\$10,584.61 was spent on gas.
That means a total of \$41,545.47 was spent on food, groceries, shopping, gas and Amazon alone.

SEE KENDLETON, PAGE 2A

Rosenberg to decide on \$2 million-plus bid

Funds would pay for updating city's waste water treatment plant

BY NICK IRENE nirene@fbherald.com

Rosenberg city officials will decide during Tuesday's meeting whether to accept a \$2 million-plus bid to update the city's main wastewater treatment plant.

Executive Director of Public Services Rigo Calzoncin and his staff recommended that the council accept a \$2.17 million bid from Hassell Construction Group LLC out of Houston.

According to the agenda, the project provides headworks and replaces the mechanical bar screen for Wastewater Treatment Plant 1A at 2700 Ave. A.

Headworks is a process that reduces the level of pollutants in the incoming domestic and industrial wastewater to a level that will allow the treated wastewater to be discharged into a river or lake.

The bar screen acts as a filter that removes large, solid objects from the wastewater.

The funding of \$1.945 million will be covered by the American Rescue Plan Act, with the remaining \$225,000 allocated from another ARPA project, if available, or waste/wastewater funds.

The estimated construction time is 300 days, City Manager John Maresh said.

Staff will discuss a budget amendment to open \$1.574 million to preorder 14 replacement vehicles from the fiscal year 2024 Fleet Replacement Fund.

Funding is received from various local departments annually based on the estimated replacement cost of the vehicles, Maresh said.

If accepted, staff will seek approval for the funding to place orders ahead of the 2024 budgeting process in early June.

This will be discussed in Tuesday's meeting at 6:30 p.m. at city hall, 2110 Fourth St.

Residents can watch the meeting on the RosenbergTXGov YouTube channel live stream.

Those unable to watch live can catch a video replay of the meeting at https://tx-rosenberg.civicplus.com/129/Agendas-Minutes.

The full agenda is also available at that web address.

Who used Harris' credit card?

Ex-city secretary resigned in June 2019 but her city-issued card was swiped repeatedly for the next 12 months

BY SCOTT REESE WILLEY swilley@fbherald.com

Veronica Harris was serving as city secretary for the city of Kendleton in June 2019 when she resigned to take care of her ailing husband.

So she was surprised to find out that someone had been swiping her city-issued credit card after she left.

Harris found out by reading about it in the Sunday, April 30, issue of The Fort Bend Herald.

The Herald obtained all the city's credit card receipts for the past three and a half years and reported its findings in a story titled "They Swipe A Lot."

The report revealed that the mayor and city secretary have spent tens of thousands of tax dollars dining out, buying groceries and shopping online over the past three years.

Between September 2019 and February 2023 — the only years in which statements were provided to The Herald — Mayor Darryl Humphrey Sr. and city secretaries Veronica Harris and Christina Flores swiped their city-issued credit cards dozens of times each month, racking up \$116,085.39 in purchases.

Only Harris wasn't around to swipe her card.

So who did? Humphrey has declined to talk to The

Herald about its report.

Of that amount, Humphrey used his city-issued credit card to purchase \$32,170.66 worth of goods and services.

Flores, who replaced Harris, used a city card in her name to purchase \$26,380.70.

A "Nameless Card" has been used since July 2020 to purchase \$54,063.43 worth of goods and services.

And a card in Harris' name accounted for \$3,470.60 in taxpayer money during that same time period.

Harris said she was upset to discover someone at city hall had continued to use her card after she had left.

"Who used it, and why would they do that?" she asked.

NEXT ISSUE: WHAT'S WITH ALL THE CAR WASHES?

Needville art students earn recognition at HLSR

For the first time ever, two Needville High School students won Best of Show honors in the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo (HLSR) Art Contest.

Junior Gabriel Pardo won 3-D Premium Best of Show for his clay sculpture titled "Runaway."

The three-dimensional sculpture features a cowboy on his horse, attempting to stop a runaway horse.

Senior Ella Victory won Best of Show for her colored drawing titled "Reminiscence," which portrays a young lady hugging her horse.

Both students study under art teacher Jimmie Amox, who is retiring this year, and both agree they will miss him a great deal.

"I better see you entering both the sculpture and drawing categories next year," Amox told Pardo, who will be a senior come fall.

Victory is graduating next month. While both teens will have a summer packed with fun, Pardo will spend part of his returning to the Western Art Academy at Schreiner University in Kerrville.

An HLSR Best of Show win last year resulted in his attending the annual four-week academy last summer as well.

The program provides advanced art



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2nd Juneteenth celebration

The Kendleton Juneteenth Roundup Committee will host Kendleton's Juneteenth Parade & Celebration on Saturday, June 10. The parade begins at 9:30 a.m. at Newman Chapel UM Church. Decorate your bikes, motorbikes and cars! Celebration takes place from 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Bates Allen Park. Expect plenty of food, drinks, games, vendors, community resources and fun, fun, fun!

Rosenberg Fido Fest set for May 21

The second annual Vogies Fido Fest and Pet Adoption will be held May 21 from 12-3 p.m. in Historic Downtown Rosenberg.

This event is an opportunity to have a fun outing with your furry (and talented) friends! Pets can compete for trophies in talent and costume contests and will be judged by downtown Rosenberg merchants and business owners. There will also be prize

drawings! Shelter pet supports groups will be on hand with information about how you can help local pets that need fur-ever homes.

The fun gets started at 1909 and 1917 Avenue G! Check in and then visit the local shops for judging. Winners will be announced at 3 p.m.

For more information, follow BR VINO on facebook @facebook.com/brvino.

Library book sale is May 6

The Friends of the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library will host a Spring Book Sale on Saturday, May 6, from 9 a.m. to 1 noon, in the Annex next door to the library, which is located at 8100 FM 359 South in Fulshear.

Good Afternoon

German Society

The Fort Bend Chapter of the Texas German Society will have a tour of the Fort Bend Museum and Moore Home, 410 S. Fifth Street, Richmond on Tuesday, May 9, at 1 p.m. Cost is \$9. For more information, call 281-342-8243.

Touch-a-truck

The city of Rosenberg will host its annual Touch-A-Truck event from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, May 6, at the Rosenberg Civic Center. Children and adults alike will get the opportunity to see plenty of vehicles up close and personal — fire trucks, police cars, dump trucks, earth movers, garbage trucks. Admission is free!

Juneteenth celebration

The city of Kendleton will host the annual Juneteenth Celebration from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 19 at Bates Allen Park, 630 Charlie Roberts Lane. The event includes history program on Juneteenth, barbecue, music and unity. Contact Mayor Darryl Humphrey Sr. for more information at 832-433-6960.

Lemonade Day

The Central Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce will host Lemonade Day from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. May 13 to teach children a unique, entrepreneurial experience where they can run their own business and make their own money. For more details, contact the chamber at lemonadeday.org/central-fort-bend or at lemonadedaycentralfortbend.com.

Adventure park to open

The city of Sugar Land and Go Ape will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony with local officials to mark the grand opening of the Go Ape Zipline & Adventure Park in Brazos River Park, located at 18427 U.S. 59 in Sugar Land just on the other side of the Brazos River from Greatwood. The ceremony will take place Wednesday, May 3, from 10-10:30 a.m. and the course will be open from 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Fort Bend Journal

Is it just me?

Why do bill collectors make me prove who I am every time I want to pay my bill? If someone calls and wants to pay my bill, let them!

— SRW

Around the Bend

Local residents graduating from the University of Texas-Tyler include Richmond residents Stephanie Espinosa, Aleesha Farst, Alain Cedric Loic Fotsso Djonkam, and Rosenberg residents Steven Arron, Antonino Duenas and Paulos Tsegay...

Obituaries

Bertha "Annie" Lara, 61

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Today's Scripture

For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

John 3:20

