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Guidry News Gazette

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Sunday, September 20, 2009

Galveston-Houston Mobility Corridor Open Houses *Transportation Consultants Seek Input on Alternative Options This Week*

The Goodman Corporation will host three open houses this week on four alternatives under consideration for the Galveston-Houston Mobility Corridor.

"Project team members will be discussing alternatives including Commuter Rail to address Gulf Freeway congestion," said Kellie Buchanan of The Goodman Corporation.



The open houses will be:

Tuesday, September 22, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Galveston Island Convention Center, Ballroom A at 5600 Seawall Boulevard in Galveston;

Wednesday, September 23, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Johnnie Arolfo Civic Center in League City; and

Thursday, September 24, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Ripley House Neighborhood Center in Houston's East End at 4410 Navigation Street.

The alternatives include No-Build, Express Bus, Bus Rapid Transit and Commuter Rail. If Commuter Rail is chosen as the local preferred alternative, it would travel at speeds of 70 to 79 miles per hour.



Seabrook City Council

Seabrook City Council, after holding an executive session that lasted beyond 2 a.m., last week voted 6-0 to accept the resignation of Council Member Tom Diegelman.

During a previous city council meeting, the city council had instructed staff to prepare information for a vote of "no confidence" in Diegelman.

"In the best interest of this stopping, and the city staff and the city manager focusing on the issues of the city, I decided to do what I think is right for the City of Seabrook at this point and time," Diegelman said in an interview last week.



"Because this obviously is not going away anytime soon."

Houston City Council

Houston City Council last week voted to approve a contract with Gerry Fusco Consulting for professional services related to the Bureau of Animal Regulation and Control.

The \$135,000 contract, which is to maintain the consultant's activities in a "turnaround" of BARC's operation, had been delayed at the September 2

meeting by Council Member Jolanda Jones.



Tiki Island Aldermen

The Village of Tiki Island Board of Aldermen last week voted unanimously to approve a three percent pay raise for all employees to be paid on the payroll date of October 8.

The board of aldermen voted unanimously to adopt a 2009 property tax rate of \$0.204667 per \$100 valuation.

The rate was above the effective rate of \$0.189507 per \$100 valuation.

The effective rate is the rate required to levy revenues equal to the previous budget year.

Bayou Vista City Council

The Bayou Vista City Council last week voted unanimously to adopt the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 Budget for the city. The budget includes projected revenues of \$787,393 for its general fund.

The city council, at a separate meeting later in the week, tabled consideration of hiring a new building inspector/code enforcement officer.

Webster City Council

Webster City Council last week voted 6-1, with Mayor Floyd Myers opposed, to approve the first and only reading of an ordinance to adopt the city's Fiscal Year 2009-2010 Budget.

The budget includes total projected revenues of \$33.511 million, with expenditures budgeted of \$32.741 million.

Beaumont City Council

Beaumont City Council last week voted unanimously to approve an allocation of \$300,000 from the 2009 HOME Program for partial funding of affordable housing at Gracelake Townhomes.

The homes are proposed for the area of 4060 West Cardinal Drive.



Friendswood City Council

Friendswood City Council last week voted 4-3, with Jim Hill, Mike Barker, and Bill Holbert opposed, to direct staff to negotiate with the City of Alvin and Wight Realty Interests regarding property the city is now hoping to annex as a sports park.

The item was to consider an earnest money contract with Wight Realty Interests, Ltd., which owns the property.

Pearland City Council

Pearland City Council last week voted unanimously to approve the final reading of a property tax increase through adoption of its 2009 Tax Rate of \$0.6526 per \$100 valuation.

Nassau Bay City Council

Nassau Bay City Council last week voted unanimously to adopt the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 Budget.

The general fund for the upcoming budget is \$4.87 million, an increase of approximately \$430,000 over the 2009 general fund budget of \$4.44 million.

Shoreacres City Council

Shoreacres City Council last week voted 4-1, with Dolly Arons opposed, to approve amendments to regulations regarding fences.

Some of the changes included prohibiting fences on vacant lots, public right-of-ways and public parks or beyond the lot line of a property.

La Porte City Council

La Porte City Council last week voted 7-0-1, with Mayor Barry Beasley abstaining, to authorize the city manager to execute a \$206,450 agreement with Klotz Associates to perform a preliminary engineering report for the Fleetwood Drive Street and Drainage Project.

La Marque City Council

La Marque City Council last week voted unanimously to approve the first reading of an ordinance to increase the speed limit on State Highway 146 from the northern city limits to the east frontage road of Interstate 45 to 55 miles per hour.

El Lago City Council

El Lago City Council last week voted unanimously to approve an ordinance requiring that swimming pools in the city be maintained.

Texas City City Commission

The Texas City City Commission last week voted unanimously to appoint Rick Wilkenfeld to fill the vacancy in Commission District 4 left by the departure of Tommy Clark.

The city commission voted unanimously to adopt a 2009 Tax Rate of \$0.4250 per \$100 valuation.

Galveston City Council

Galveston City Council last week voted 5-2, with Elizabeth Beeton and Susan Finnewald opposed, to approve a budget for FY2010 with a tax rate increase of \$0.06 per \$100 valuation; and a budget that includes six percent pay raises for municipal employees.

The city council chambers were packed with city employees speaking in support of their pay raise.



Extensive audio excerpts of the meeting, along with photos by Juan Pena, are posted on GuidryNews.com.

Pasadena City Council

Pasadena City Council last week voted unanimously to approve on first reading a \$1,629,550 contract with D&W Contractors, Inc. for the annual Storm Sewer and Pavement Replacement Project.



Galveston County

Galveston County Budget Officer James Wilson has been promoted to coordinate the county's Community Development Block Grant Housing Program.

"We are not in the housing business," said County Judge Jim Yarbrough.

"We want to put somebody in there who has some experience in managing this type of environment."

Yarbrough said that Ron Shelby will likely be named to replace Wilson in the budget office.



Jefferson County

Jefferson County Commissioners Court last week voted unanimously to

ratify a letter notifying Harris County of the termination of an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between the counties regarding jail services.

Harris County

Harris County Commissioners Court last week voted unanimously "to exercise the option to develop, design, finance, construct, operate and maintain" the portion of the proposed Grand Parkway within Harris County.

The Harris County Hospital District Board of Managers last week unanimously agreed to withdraw from negotiations involving the possible purchase of the Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital.

"I approached this whole process from the beginning as a simple examination of a possible deal to improve service and access to care," said Harris County Commissioner Sylvia Garcia.

Friendswood School Board

The Friendswood Independent School District Board of Trustees last week voted unanimously to renew its membership in the interlocal Texas Association of School Boards Risk Management Fund Unemployment Compensation Program.



Texas City School Board

The Texas City Independent School District Board of Trustees last week voted unanimously to approve tax rates totaling \$1.2160 per \$100 valuation.

Hitchcock ISD School Board

The Hitchcock Independent School District Board of Trustees last week voted unanimously to approve moving 4-6 grades to Stewart Elementary when the new Hitchcock

Primary School is completed and to move Pre-Kindergarten through 3rd Grade to Hitchcock Primary School.

Houston ISD School Board

The Houston Independent School District Board of Education last week voted unanimously to approve additional funding allocations to facilities projects in each of the nine trustee districts for a total of \$121.5 million.

Dickinson ISD School Board

The Dickinson Independent School District Board of Trustees last week voted unanimously to nominate Gary Jones, Walt Syres, David Moss, Victor Pierson and Emery Williams, II to the Galveston Central Appraisal District Board of Directors.

Galveston ISD School Board

The Galveston Independent School District Board of Trustees last week voted 5-1, with Beau Rawlins opposed, to approve the rental of portable classroom units for three campuses.

Texas General Land Office

Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson, at a news conference on the western end of the Galveston Seawall, last week announced \$135.4 million in coastal protection projects, which he described as an ambitious effort to take the fight against beach erosion coast-wide, in a coordinated effort from South Padre Island to McFaddin Beach.

"We are here today to make a really positive announcement, not just for the Texas coast and Galveston, but for Texas," Patterson said. "What is good for the Texas coast is good for Texas."

Next weekend is the GLO Adopt A Beach Cleanup.

GuidryNews.com is a media sponsor of the event.



H-GAC Board of Directors

The Houston-Galveston Area Council Board of Directors last week voted unanimously to endorse a position statement on second round funding of Community Development Block Grant Funds by the Office of Rural Community Affairs.

"We've all been very busy over the last two weeks contacting our various representatives in Austin to persuade ORCA to change the model that they are trying to use; and use the model that they used for the first round of funding, because it worked well," said Galveston Mayor Lyda Ann Thomas.

Greater Houston Partnership

United States Senator John Cornyn was the featured speaker at a State of the Senate Luncheon sponsored by the Greater Houston Partnership on Friday.

"Much has changed in the last two years," Cornyn said, recalling his previous address to the Partnership two years ago. "We now have a new president in the White House. We have single party control of the House and the Senate."

Photos and a recording of Cornyn's speech are posted on GuidryNews.com.

Livable Communities

Representatives of The Goodman Corporation last week updated the Galveston Intermodal Transportation Committee on the Livable Communities Initiative, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Implementation Plan and the Five-Year Mobility Plan.

John Carrara said the plans still call for a downtown transportation terminal to be located in Shearn Moody Plaza.

"Everyone is in agreement on the concept, but there is not a lease in place yet."



Deaths

Robert George Kennedy (54) of Village Mills, died Friday, September 11, 2009 at John Sealy Hospital in Galveston.

Kathy Lynn Williams (58) of Galveston, passed away Friday, September 11, 2009, at her residence.

Frank Phifer, Sr. (74) of Texas City, died Thursday, July 9, 2009 at his residence in Texas City.

Steven L. Sutton (49) of Galveston passed away Saturday, September 12, 2009, at the VA Hospital in Houston.

Ruby B. Charles (101) passed into eternal rest on September 12, 2009.

Hope Henrietta Lopez (80) of Galveston, passed away Sunday, September 13, 2009, at UTMB Hospital.

Charles Baldwin (73) died on Sunday, September 13, 2009 at the Friendship Haven Care Center in Friendswood, TX.

Connie Dodge Johnson (64) of Galveston passed away Tuesday, September 15, 2009, at her residence.

Meetings and Events

Sunday, September 20

2:00 **Grease**, Theatre Under The Stars, Hobby Center

2:30 **Doubt**, College of the Mainland Community Theatre

2:30 **You Can't Take It With You**, Clear Creek Community Theatre

3:00 **The House of Spirits**, Main Street Theater - Rice Village

3:00 **Seven Guitars**

(Preview), Ensemble Theatre

7:30 **Grease**, Theatre Under The Stars, Hobby Center

Monday, September 21

1:30 **Jefferson County Commissioners Court**

5:00 **Kemah Parks Plan Meeting**

5:30 **College of the Mainland Open Forum on Tax Rate**

6:00 **College of the Mainland Workshop**

6:00 **Jamaica Beach City Council**

6:30 **Kemah City Council Joint Meeting with Kemah Community Development Corporation**

6:30 **Kemah Community Development Corporation**

6:30 **Hitchcock City Commission**

6:30 **Dickinson Independent School District Board of Trustees**

7:00 **Kemah City Council**

7:00 **Santa Fe Independent School District Board of Trustees**

Tuesday, September 22

9:00 **Brazoria County Commissioners Court**

10:00 **Pasadena City Council**

11:30 **League City Economic Development Corporation Monthly Luncheon**, Johnny Arolfo Civic

Center. Blaine Brown, Lockheed Martin's Integrated Product Team Director for the design and development of the Orion spacecraft Crew Module will speak

1:30 **Houston City Council**

1:30 **Beaumont City Council**

5:00 **League City Workshop**

5:30 **Pasadena Independent School District Board of Trustees**

6:00 **Galveston-Houston Corridor Mobility Study Open House**, Galveston Island Convention Center

6:00 **Dickinson City Council Workshop**

6:00 **League City City Council**

7:00 **Clear Lake Shores City Council**

7:00 **Dickinson City Council**

Wednesday, September 23

8:30 **Galveston County Commissioners Court Workshop and Meeting**

9:00 **Houston City Council**

6:00 **Galveston-Houston Corridor Mobility Study Open House**, Johnny Arolfo Civic Center, League City

7:30 **Seven Guitars**

(Preview), Ensemble Theatre

Thursday, September 24

1:30 **Gulf Coast Water Authority**

4:00 **Galveston City Council**

5:30 **Groves City Council Special Meeting**

6:00 **Galveston-Houston Corridor Mobility Study Open House**, Ripley House Neighborhood Center,

Houston

7:00 **Santa Fe City Council**

7:30 **The House of Spirits**, Main Street Theater - Rice Village

8:00 **Doubt**, College of the Mainland Community Theatre

Friday, September 25

8:00 **The House of Spirits**, Main Street Theater - Rice Village

8:00 **Doubt**, College of the Mainland Community Theatre

8:00 **You Can't Take It With You**, Clear Creek Community Theatre

8:00 **Seven Guitars**, Ensemble Theatre

Saturday, September 26

2:00 **Seven Guitars**, Ensemble Theatre

8:00 **The House of Spirits**, Main Street Theater - Rice Village

8:00 **Doubt**, College of the Mainland Community Theatre

8:00 **You Can't Take It With You**, Clear Creek Community Theatre

8:00 **Seven Guitars**, Ensemble Theatre

8:00 **Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?**, Island etc. at the Strand Theater, Galveston

Sunday, September 27

2:30 **Doubt**, College of the Mainland Community Theatre

2:30 **You Can't Take It With You**, Clear Creek Community Theatre

2:30 **Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?**, Island etc. at the Strand Theater, Galveston

3:00 **Seven Guitars**, Ensemble Theatre

3:00 **The House of Spirits**, Main Street Theater - Rice Village

About Guidry News Service

Guidry News Service is headquartered in Midtown Houston, with offices in Downtown Beaumont and Downtown Galveston. Call (409) 763-NEWS (6397) or email News@GuidryNews.com Jim and Lynda Guidry are publishers of Gulf Coast E-news; GuidryNews.com, The Online News Station; and the Guidry News Gazette. Garrett Bryce is managing editor. Ashley Ayala is editor of the Guidry News Gazette and special assistant. Carl Guidry covers events in Jefferson County. Jim Richardson and Jim Cook are Washington, D.C. correspondents. Robert John Mihovil and Juan Peña are special correspondents. Jason Adriance is webmaster.