

# The Baytown Sun

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## Baytown police seeking Walmart bank robber

BY MATT HOLLIS  
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Baytown police are looking for a man who robbed a bank inside the Garth Road Walmart.

According to police, a bank employee of the Woodforest National Bank inside the Walmart Supercenter on Garth Road said shortly before noon Saturday a man approached the counter and handed her a note. The note read, "No alarms, I need \$2,000 in all \$100 bills and no bands."

Police spokeswoman Lt. Luzette Watkins said the employee handed over the money and the man left the area in an

older white travel van.

Watkins added that the man did not display a firearm.

The suspect is described as a white male, approximately 60 years old, with sunken cheeks and a soft voice.

The bank was open on Monday.

Anyone with information on the robbery is encouraged to contact Baytown Crimestoppers. You can call, text or fill out an online form anonymously. Call Baytown Crimestoppers at 281-427-TIPS (8477) or text keyword "Baytown" plus the tip to 274637 (CRIMES) or fill out a form at baytown.org/city-hall/departments/police/crime-stoppers.



Woodforest National Bank surveillance video show the man sought in connection to a robbery at Walmart Saturday.

## City boosts mass notification system

BY MATT HOLLIS  
matt.hollis@baytownsun.com

Whenever there is an emergency situation, it is best to warn as many people as possible as soon as possible.

This could be an active shooter or a severe weather event and even a few seconds of warning can save lives.

In a move to help keep citizens and government employees safe in the event

of a crisis, the Greater Baytown-Chambers County Local Emergency Planning Committee has deployed an innovative unified mass notification system from Alertus Technologies.

"The Alertus Emergency Notification System is a comprehensive solution that can be implemented anywhere and activated quickly and effectively," said Alertus spokesman

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Fishing should only get better as weather cools

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## COMMUNITY



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GC event gives students opportunity to show off athletic abilities

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## WEATHER



High 77  
Low 68

Cloudy, some rain • Page 2

## BIBLE VERSE

Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.

— Psalm 95:2-3

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# It's beginning to look alot like ...



Baytown Sun file photo

Baytown Christmas parade-goers line Texas Avenue ahead of the 2015 event. This year's parade is on Dec. 1. The city of Baytown's ice skating rink at Town Square will open the day after Thanksgiving and will remain open from 6 to 10 p.m. seven days a week. Skating hours will be limited to 1 to 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. The rink will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

## Ice skating rink slated to open Friday

BY CHRISTOPHER JAMES

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The Christmas tree has been raised, ice has been made and life-guards are in training for Baytown's one and only ice rink opening for the Christmas season.

On Friday, from 6 p.m. – 10 p.m., the Town Square Ice Rink (213 W. Texas Ave.) will be open to the public. Skating costs \$10 a person (\$8 for children under 48 inches tall), which includes skates.

"Everything is going well," said Parks and Recreation Director Scott Johnson. "We have the ice made, the rink is up and it's ready to go."

Barring any rainfall Friday, the

rink will open where both Cork Grinders and Como en Mexico Ice Cream shop will offer beverages such as hot chocolate and coffee.

Following Friday, the rink will be open daily from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. with the exception of Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, which will open from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The ice rink will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Furthermore, the rink will be open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. during Christmas on Texas Avenue on Dec. 3 and on Snow Day, Jan. 7; and will be open 8 a.m. – noon for the December Famers Market, Dec. 17.

The Town Square Ice Rink will close for the season at 10 p.m. Sun-

day, Jan. 8.

Private rentals are also available during non-standard hours at \$150 per hour.

The Parks and Recreation Department is training lifeguards from Pirates Bay and Calypso Cove to operate the ice rink because — come Friday, the Town Square Park will be the one and only outdoor rink in east Harris County.

"Dress warm for the evening," said Johnson. "Once the sun goes down it can be chilly, especially inside the rink."

"Come out, have fun and skate until you're tired," he added.

For more information, contact the parks department at 281-422-1151.

### Turkey Day forecast: Nice

Severe weather is expected in much of southeast Texas today and into Wednesday but come Thanksgiving Day, dry weather is in the forecast.

Baytown is expected to have a high of 76 degrees on Thanksgiving Day and a low of 60.

And then on Friday, the high is 73 degrees with a low of 55. There is also a 40 percent chance of morning rain Friday.

— Christopher James

## Expansion on horizon for Patients ER

BY CHRISTOPHER JAMES

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Two years ago, Lee College alumni Jonathan Bohannon and Jeanne Shipp opened the doors to their own freestanding emergency room in Baytown.

On Monday, the two former nurses turned entrepreneurs celebrated the two-year anniversary of Patients ER by looking to the future by existing current facilities and opening new ones.

"There's like 200 (freestanding) ERs in Texas — the state is a hotbed for ERs — and we're the busiest freestanding ER in the state," said Shipp, a single mother of four who

grew up in La Porte but has lived and raised her family in Baytown for the last 30 years. "And when you see our billboards around town that say No. 1 hometown ER, it's because we think the success is because of our local influence, which has been here forever."

In 2014, both Bohannon and Shipp — classmates who first met at Lee College in 2003 as members of a study group — made their dream of owning and operating a freestanding emergency room a reality when they opened Patients ER at Interstate 10 and Highway 146.

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## Superior Singers



Goose Creek CISD choirs scored big in region vocal auditions, including 38 Gentry Junior vocalists, above, named to the All-Region Choir. Story on Page 3.

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## OBITUARIES

For obituary information, call 281-422-8302



### Enrique Navar Sr.

Enrique Navar Sr., age 74, passed away November 19, 2016 in Houston, Texas, surrounded by his loving family.

He was born in Durango, Mexico to Pedro Na-

var and Celia Cervantes on February 2, 1942.

He was a resident of Baytown since 1977.

Enrique is survived by his loving wife of 51 years, Irene Navar Cantu; sons, Pedro A. Navar and wife Patricia of Houston, Texas, Enrique Navar Jr., Jose Edson Navar and Miguel A. Navar all of Baytown; daughters, Celia Navar of Baytown, Nelda Navar of LaPorte, Texas. grandchildren fourteen; great-grandchildren three; bro. Juan Navar Rivera; sisters, Consuelo Navar De Cabrera, Hilda Navar De Gonzalez and Cirina Navar De Torres all of Rio Bravo, Mexico.

Pallbearers are Juan

Cantu, Miguel Navar, Enrique Navar Jr., Joe Edson Navar, Juan Navar and Pedro Navar.

Visitation will at Guillen Baytown Funeral Home on November 22, 2016 from 5-9 p.m. with a service at 7 p.m., with Minister Eduardo Navar officiating.

Funeral Service will be November 23, 2016 at 10:30 a.m. at Guillen Baytown Funeral Home.

Interment to follow at Earthman Memory Gardens Cemetery in Baytown, Texas.



1308 S. Hwy. 146 | Baytown, TX | 281-837-1509

# GCCISD choirs score big in region vocal auditions

Goose Creek CISD's secondary level fine arts students in vocal music (choir) have traveled the region in hopes of earning coveted positions in the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) Region Choirs. After being moved to Region 19, a new collection of districts which are known for strong choral programs, Goose Creek CISD students tested their mettle against some of the best.

At the junior school level, GCCISD choir programs auditioned and earned 55 seats in the Region 19 choirs, with all campuses qualifying students to the TMEA event. The campuses sent a number of students (Baytown Junior - 4, Horace Mann Junior - 1, Cedar Bayou Junior - 5, Highlands Junior - 7) to the Region. An outstanding point of focus, however, was Gentry Junior School, which placed an unprecedented 38 students into the region choir, four of whom were 1st chair singers. With 38 qualifiers, GJS edged out all other districts in Region 19, including Deer Park and Pearland, with the most student vocalists named to that honor. Mireya Mejia, Gentry head choir director, contributes the success to the students and some creative classroom motivation.

"The success of our students stems from the culture that we've created in the choir program through leadership and high expectations. Our students focused tremendous energy in class time rehearsals. They worked harder this year than they ever have before and the students garnered a huge reward for that. We made a Region Wall of Fame and challenged the students to earn their name on it. They came in after school, during lunches and in their free time and rehearsed their music - they wanted to paint their name on the wall and that's exactly what they did. They set goals and achieved them," Mejia said.

In the high school arena, all three GCCISD choral programs qualified a total of 74 students to the Region 19 choirs. Ross S. Sterling High School led the charge, notching 36 qualifiers to the region and advancing 11 individuals to the Pre-Area round of the TMEA All-State Vocal Auditions.

"We're just very fortunate to have students that work hard and want to be successful. They truly love singing and love the contest. Driving that passion for choir and success has really propelled them to these results," said Levi Duncan, head choir director at RSS.

Pre-Area qualifiers were Zoey Henderson, Karsyn Heyen, McKenzie Comeaux, Carolina Villegas, Tomas de la Rosa, Cody Harris, Nic Pompa, Jayce Howard, Alex Contreras, Peyton Moseley and Andrew Beck.

Goose Creek Memorial High School bested that number of advancers, sending 12 of its own vocalists to the Pre-Area round while qualifying 35 students to the region choirs.

"Hard work and determination is what got our students here. We're up against harder competition in the new region and our kids did wonderfully. I'm proud of what we've accomplished," said Holly Lewallen, GCM head choir director.

Pre-Area qualifiers for GCM were Skylar Newton, Seth Baal, Edgar Landa, Aidan Cottar, Angel Amador, Trueston Buxie, Jalon Douglas, Erica Inman, Reyna Jackson, Courtney Riffle, Axel Rodriguez and Abigail Rodriguez.

Robert E. Lee High School did not have advancers to the Pre-Area playoff, but will send four of its outstanding male vocalists, Justo Rodriguez, Joel Lopez, Michael Sanchez and Jacob Benetez, as members of the Region 19 Men's Choir.

Phillip Morgan, GCCISD's director of fine arts,

was highly impressed with the results of the auditions.

"For Goose Creek to place 74 high school students in the new Region 19 choirs and advance 23 to the Pre-Area playoff/audition round is truly phenomenal. Our district has some of the most talented vocal instructors and students in the state of Texas and these results reflect that belief. Having Gentry Junior School boast 38 into the choirs speaks volumes to the superior instruction by our teachers in the development pipeline of our choral system at that level. They have amazing skill sets and our students reap the benefit of that fact," Morgan said.

High School all-region qualifiers performed Saturday, November 12, at the Deer Park ISD Performing Arts Center. Qualifying All-Region Junior School choir students will perform in their respective concerts on Saturday, December 3, at the Deer Park ISD Performing Arts Center. Advancers to the Pre-Area round of TMEA All-State auditions will compete at the same location on Thursday, Dec. 1, to try to earn a trip to the TMEA Area round of playoffs.

## Body found in Highlands ID'd

BY CHRISTOPHER JAMES

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Little is known about a body that was found in a Highlands canal last month, after it was initially difficult to determine the gender due to decomposition. But the medical examiners have since identified the victim as 47-year-old Clarence Tompkins.

Tompkins was found dead in a fresh water canal at S. Main Street and Interstate 10, in Highlands on Oct. 28. Cause of death has yet to be determined.

Harris County Officers initially re-

sponded to a report of a body floating in the canal.

The body was then recovered with the help of a dive team when it washed up against the grating that keeps objects from going further down into the canal system.

Authorities could not immediately identify the gender, due to the body being in the water for a long period of time and decomposing.

According to the medical examiners, his next of kin is his son who is in a Harris County jail. Anyone with information about this is asked to call the Homicide division, 713-274-9100.



Baytown Sun photo by Matt Hollis

Baytown Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator Ryan Holzaepfel shows City of Baytown employee Christina Jimenez how to operate an alert beacon that is part of the Alertus Emergency Notification System, installed at City Hall and other locations in the city.

## CITY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Greg Smith. "Its seamless compatibility and integration with a wide variety of existing mass notification systems provides the city and county a cost-effective way to enhance their emergency communications efforts."

The LEPC deployed more than 80 Alertus Alert Beacons throughout its public schools and publicly owned buildings including Baytown City Hall and the county courthouse. These wall-mounted devices can be installed almost anywhere and provide notification coverage where other systems may be impractical or cost-prohibitive.

"These are the units that were placed in city buildings that have public assembly occupancy," said Baytown Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator Ryan Holzaepfel. "We have outdoor warning sirens for outdoor warnings, but these are the devices that are for indoor warning."

Holzaepfel said the systems have also been provided for Goose Creek CISD, Barbers Hill ISD, Anahuac ISD, East Chambers County ISD and Lee College. He added that within the local emergency planning, Chambers County was included in its entirety.

"Dispatch can activate these, and Mont Belvieu and Chambers County can both activate theirs and warn people of the need to shelter in place," Holzaepfel said. "It doesn't have to be chemical, it can be any kind of emergency to lockdown or shelter in place."

Lee College Vice President of Finance and Administration Steve Evans said the system has worked out well for the college.

"We are very satisfied with Alertus and its use on our campus," Evans said. "We are able to instantly notify students and employees of emergencies, etc. through their cellphones, computers, office desktops, and campus alarm systems."

Baytown spokeswoman Patti Jett said the idea was to have an emergency system in place for locations that are constantly attended by people.

"We are layering ways to communicate emergencies to people and let them know what actions need to be taken," Jett said.

Jett said that in addition to the sirens and Alertus system, the city also makes phone calls in emergencies as well as alert citizens through Facebook and Twitter pages.

Holzaepfel said that all Baytown City Hall employees have knowledge on how the Alertus system works.

"We also test it every Wednesday in conjunction with the community siren warning test," he said. "This will alert people in the building and give them instructions on what emergency and what precautions they should take. It displays instructions in large text, flashes and beeps loudly. The receptionist can acknowledge the message and send it back to dispatch saying that someone in this building got the message, and the message still shows after that."

Holzaepfel said that there are 80 beacons located in buildings throughout the city.

"Typically, we put one at a location that is constantly attended while the building is occupied," he said. "Everyone in the building will hear it because it is loud enough."

A computer app is available free of charge to any-

where where they were not able to provide a beacon, Holzaepfel said.

The main reason why the city chose Alertus, according to Holzaepfel, was how it was being used successfully in other cities such as Pasadena, La Porte and Deer Park.

"They have been for several years," Holzaepfel said. "And we knew it would integrate the software that activates our community warning sirens. Instead of having to log into two different software packages and remember two different passwords, this makes it easier."

Holzaepfel said the LEPC funded the bulk of Alertus systems, and they cost about \$800 per unit. The LEPC membership is comprised of local industry members such as ExxonMobil, Chevron Phillips and Covestro. The LEPC was able to purchase and implement Alertus because of the contributions made by these local industrial partners. The LEPC jurisdiction includes Baytown and Mont Belvieu, as well as Chambers County.

Jett said that the system is not replacing anything, just adding to what they already in place.

"The more people you can reach and the better off you are," Jett said.

### Volunteer meeting for communitywide feast Wednesday

The Baytown Community Alliance volunteers is hosting the 20th annual "Friends Serving Friends" even on Thanksgiving Day.

The feast, held on Thanksgiving Day from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., is free and open to the public.

They also need volunteers to help serve the dinner. The volunteer meeting is the night before the feast, Nov. 23, at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center.

For more information, to receive a meal, or to donate, call Shirley Sneed at 281-543-7874, Dawn Enderli at 281-979-6988 or Marsha Burton at 281-573-3058.

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