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Inside Progress 2020

Progress is an annual publication of KDH Media Group that focuses on the developments of the past year in the Central Texas communities the Killeen Daily Herald serves.

The section also takes an in-depth look at the changes in store in the year ahead.

This year's 68-page edition includes news, information, photographs and advertisements that highlight the positive developments in Killeen and its neighboring communities of Harker Heights, Fort Hood, Copperas Cove, Belton, Nolanville, Florence, Salado and Lampasas.

In addition to chronicling developments in the business sector, Progress also features news and analysis from the areas of education, military, real estate, recreation and the medical community.

The content for the 2020 Progress edition was created by staff of the Killeen Daily Herald's editorial and advertising departments, as well as several news correspondents.

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BUSINESS

Killeen's population is growing...and rapidly

BY MONIQUE BRAND
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

The city of Killeen is growing and could top 179,000 in nine years.

Tony McIlwain, Killeen's interim director of planning and development services, estimates the current population at 149,998 — 10,000 more than five years ago.

"Killeen is a growing community. Fundamentally, growth signals that our city is an attractive place to call home," McIlwain said. "Population can be a key driver in economic development opportunities for companies that seek high growth areas or higher population markers. Killeen's primary and secondary housing markets remain robust and affordable."

The Killeen Planning and Development Services Department predicts in its current reports that the population could reach 179,079 by 2029, citing the "numbers are updated annually and are expected to change."

"City staff derives the population estimate by analyzing active water meter accounts, housing units, average family size and historic growth trends relative to the county's overall



As Killeen's population grows, so do business opportunities. One new venture is this Jeep dealership.

population," McIlwain said.

Projections by the Texas Water Development Board reflect that the number would top 238,000 by 2050.

Beginning in mid-March, residents throughout the state can expect to see 2020 Census questionnaires arrive in the mail.

Self-response begins March 12, and continues through July, according to a U.S. Census spokesman.

This year, residents will be able to answer their census surveys online,

over the phone or by mail.

After each census, the U.S. House of Representatives are reapportioned to determine the number of seats each state has in the House.

Texas is expected to gain three congressional seats after the 2020 Census, according to the Brennan Center for Justice.

Similarly, the Texas government will use the census data to redraw the boundaries of congressional districts for the state Legislature.

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More than a thousand people marched through the streets of downtown Killeen on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

2019 a year of ups and downs for Killeen community

BY MONIQUE BRAND
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

The city of Killeen had its share of ups and downs in 2019.

The year began with leaders of the NAACP finding out that the organization would have to pay for traffic control for the annual MLK march due to a change in city policy on funding. Because of that, for the first time in 20 years, the march was held at Lions Club Park rather than downtown Killeen.

In 2020, it was back to its original route after a unanimous vote by the Killeen City Council for the city to monetarily support the march. It was held on Jan. 20 beginning at City Hall 101 N. College St.

Another local story was the vote of 4-3 in opposition of impact fees after almost 10 years of discussion among the Killeen City Council.

With the council vote on Dec. 17, area developers are not going to pay for new roads, water and sewer pipes leading up to new developments.

Erupting over the summer months were two major issues that involved city funding — possible discontinuing of the

Hill Country Transit District buses and the closing of the homeless shelter.

The Hop has urban and rural divisions, which service three Killeen routes and two intercity routes that connect Killeen to Cove and east Bell County. There is an additional route each in Heights and Cove, two routes in Temple, one in Belton and a connector route in east Bell County.

The Hop provided to the Killeen a range of packages to choose from to keep the buses running; starting at \$120,850 to the most expensive option with a price tag of \$806,618. The city provided a total of \$222,366 to the Hop to retain service.

The Friends in Crisis homeless shelter was closed for two months so administrators could find more money. Many residents with no place to go camped on the shelter grounds for the entire closing. The shelter's front lawn, with dozens of tents, was dubbed 'Tent City.'

The shelter's parent organization, Families in Crisis, raised enough money to reopen in July.

At City Hall, there was a change in command when Ron Olson retired from city management on Oct. 1. His

successor is former Leander City Manager Kent Cagle. Cagle, who started work Dec. 3, was picked out of 29 candidates nationwide.

Also, three Killeen incumbents won the May 4 local elections — Jim Kilpatrick, Steve Harris and Debbie Nash-King. Their terms end in May 2021.

As the leaves fell, homicide numbers rose. The total reported number spiked in double digits to 16. One double homicide that happened earlier in the year within city limits is a Temple police case, and therefore, not being counted in KPD's statistics of violent crimes, making the department's count at 14.

In 2018, there were seven criminal homicides, according to police.

Along with some of the homicides, the north side of the city was turning into a food desert with two grocery stores closing one month apart.

IGA Foodliner and H-E-B closed stores in north Killeen in August and September, respectively.

Concerns about crime and access to groceries brought two groups together to tackle the issue.

A march even took place that brought on 200 participants.

City manager to focus on homelessness, growth in first year

BY MONIQUE BRAND
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

It's been nearly three months since James "Kent" Cagle took the helm as Killeen's new city manager.

Cagle, 58, replaced Ron Olson, who retired Oct. 1, 2019, after more than 40 years of city management in various cities, including Killeen. Cagle was selected in November out of a total 29 nationwide candidates. His official start date was Dec. 3.

Since 1987, the Tulia, Texas, native has worked in local government — beginning his city management career in January 2001.

Cagle said his reception in Killeen has been a warm one, and he enjoyed "getting to know them (department heads)." The proud Texas Tech Red Raiders fan also said there were no surprises when he came to Killeen as he did "extensive research."

He also added that during his time as city manager "we will deliver a balanced budget."

"I will be engaging city council and staff very soon to help establish priorities. I know we have a very sizeable list of issues that require more resources than are available, so we will do our best to prioritize and make the best use of the funds that we have," Cagle said in an interview earlier this year.

When asked if he'd set any goals for his first year as city manager, Cagle said

two issues "come to mind immediately."

HOMELESSNESS

Killeen's homelessness needs came to light in the summer of 2019 when the local shelter closed down for about three months due to financial issues.

The nonprofit shelter closed temporarily May 18 after a grant for \$123,000 was discontinued and an Emergency Solutions Grant for \$93,500 was cut to \$51,273.

In June, a slew of camping tents were pitched in front of Friends in Crisis homeless shelter in downtown Killeen. It was dubbed "Tent City."

Killeen area residents helped bring food, water and portable sanitary facilities to the encampment. Some people donated money.

The shelter raised enough funds to reopen in July.

Today, the shelter remains open but there are still signs of homelessness in Killeen, mainly downtown.

Cagle said he would like to see the community come together and deal with the homeless situation.

"This can't be just a top down government funded solution, city government can be a partner, but the solution must be community based," Cagle said. "Downtown should be a significant revenue generator for the city, and it will continue to decline unless the homeless situation is addressed."

GROWTH

Cagle is aware of the need to pay for

growth in Killeen.

The city has experienced its share of growth in recent years with the current population being close to 150,000 — 10,000 more than five years ago. Projections by the Texas Water Development Board reflect that the number would top 238,000 by 2050.

Also on the rise is the demand for city services like water delivery, wastewater removal, roads and first responders.

Cagle said the city needs "to have a thorough discussion about growth, including the impacts it has on service level demands and infrastructure, so that we can plan and take deliberate actions to make Killeen what we want it to be in the future."

Added Cagle: "Inside of City Hall, we have a great group of committed employees that work very hard for the City of Killeen. Outside of City Hall, I would say that we are a small city with big city problems, but without the big city resources to deal with those problems."

Cagle said his strength to address these and other city issues is his experience in both fast growing and mature cities.

"While Killeen is experiencing rapid growth, it is also an older city in need of redevelopment. I have a successful track record in solving problems in both types of cities," he added. "In the coming years, I look forward to helping Killeen solve its most pressing problems. The issues Killeen faces will take time to address, and I'm committed to being part of the long-term solutions."

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Killeen's downtown area thrives as businesses open

BY MONIQUE BRAND
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

A mural, new businesses and renovations were some of the activities that happened in downtown Killeen during the past year, and city staff confirms more to come in 2020.

The Historic District in downtown Killeen had some upgrades in 2019 including an interactive online story map. It showcases the district's current businesses, history, vacant properties listings, resident participation opportunities and upcoming events.

Visit bit.ly/Killeendowntownmap to try the map out.

A bit of color was splashed downtown with a historic mural, at 316 N. Gray St. alleyway, completed by local artist, Joe Perez. Another local artist, James Kirk, designed banners that were installed throughout the Historic District.

The City of Killeen recently put the banners up throughout the Historic District. The district's boundaries are North Fourth Street on the west, the north side of East Avenue B to the north and designated sides of North Eighth Street to the east, and Santa Fe Plaza Drive to the south.

The newly established Downtown Coordination Team, according to Deirdre Kirk, the city's revitalization planner, worked diligently to provide efficient basic services and to complete



This mural was completed by local artist Joe Perez in downtown Killeen last year.

projects to beautify and increase the atmosphere of the Historic District, which included replanting and maintaining city-owned vegetation.

Another city-supported initiative, the North Killeen Revitalization Program — which helps support improvements through redevelopment and development — was utilized by 15 residential and 16 commercial projects.

Along with redevelopment, nine new businesses were established in the Historic District in 2019, Kirk said.

WHAT'S AHEAD

Some new things are in the works this year, including a farmers market, planned to begin in spring and will be held on Avenue D and Gray Street every Tuesday from 3 to 6 p.m.

Other developments include:

- Four new businesses are anticipated in the Historic District.
- The Downtown Killeen Merchants Association is being formalized to include the Historic District and greater downtown.



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Study shows potential growth in Killeen-Fort Hood area

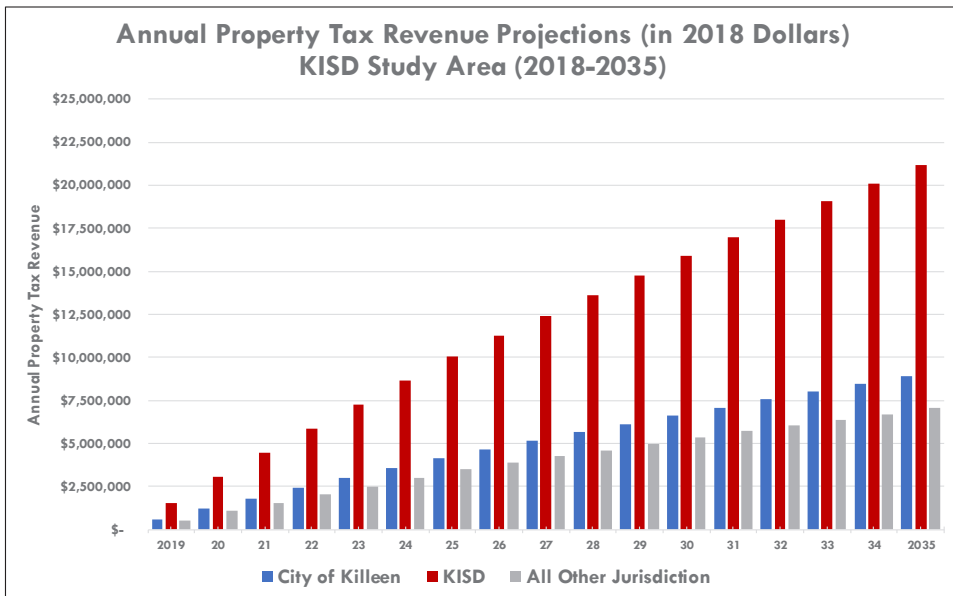
BY MONIQUE BRAND AND THADDEUS IMERMAN
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

The Killeen-Fort Hood area has experienced its share of growth in recent years.

According to one study, population in the area — which includes Killeen, Harker Heights, Nolanville and Fort Hood — is expected to be around 247,000 people in five years. In 2018, there were 223,745 residents.

In December, the yearlong study was publicly released that relied deep into the demographic trends and showcased how many people are moving to the Killeen area. The study was analyzed by RKG Associates Inc. of Alexandria, Virginia, and it did not include Copperas Cove or other nearby cities. The study heavily analyzed the Killeen Independent School District, which could see an increase of more than 11,000 students in the next five years.

According to the study, there are several factors driving the expected



Source: RKG Associates, Inc., 2019

increase of population: a high birth-to-death ratio, the attractiveness of veteran services and California transplants.

The Killeen area has a birth-to-death ratio of 3.1 people born for every person who dies. Part of the reason for the high

ratio is that the median age of people in Killeen is lower than the median age across the state, according to the study.

Russ Archambault, vice president and principal of RKG, said 300,000 Californians move to Texas each year.

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Despite Delta's departure two years ago, the Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport continues to see an increase in boardings.

Killeen-Fort Hood airport boarding numbers continue to rise

BY MONIQUE BRAND
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Two years after a major airline parted ways with the Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport, it shows no signs of slowing down.

On Jan. 15, 2018, Atlanta-based Delta Airlines pulled out of the airport, stripping four incoming and outgoing flights from the daily rotation.

The reason for the Delta pullout was “a business decision nationwide to depart many small airports, (Killeen airport) was one of those which they departed,” said former aviation director Matthew Van Valkenburgh.

Since the Delta departure, the airport experienced an increase in boardings due to “more flights (from both United and American), larger aircraft, competitive air fares, (and) great customer service.”

In 2017, the airport had 129,798 passengers boarding airplanes and 131,745 passengers departing airplanes. In 2018, the airport experienced 131,313 and 130,095, respectively.

In 2019, there were 139,694 passengers boarding and 139,645 passengers departing.

BY THE NUMBERS

Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport budget:

FY18: \$2,254,467

FY19: \$2,656,335

FY20: \$3,067,707

Skylark Field budget:

FY18: \$515,642

FY19: \$359,659

FY20: \$393,232

Source: City of Killeen

There were some significant changes in 2019. In February, the regional airport partnered with CSI Aviation, a New Mexico-based worldwide aviation services company with bases in Killeen and West Palm Beach, Florida.

CSI will occupy part of the new hangar being built with the grant from the Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Improvement Program, according to city staff.

CSI provides air charter and aircraft leasing to corporations, athletic teams, political campaigns and government agencies.

Also, there is a place to dine in at the airport — Blimpie Subs and

Sandwiches. The restaurant set up shop in early May at the food court, according to an employee. The restaurant opens one hour before the first flight and “will stay open late to accommodate late arrivals as necessary,” said Van Valkenburgh in a previous Herald story.

There has also been a change in command, as Van Valkenburgh retired in late October. Mike Wilson is the new interim aviation director. An executive recruitment is currently underway to select a permanent replacement.

Coming up in 2020:

- Conceptual design of a corporate hangar for CSI Aviation at Skylark
- Construction of a new 8-unit box hangar at Skylark
- In the design phase of a new baggage belt system
- In the design phase of solar integrated covered parking for the rental car lot at KFHRA

SKYLARK FIELD

The city's second airport, Skylark Field, got a new look with a new T-hangar facility. Skylark currently has commercial leases with Central Texas College, Freedom Air Helicopter and Diamond Star Aviation.

The HOP provides public transportation

BY DAVID PERDUE
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

In 2019, budget concerns led many to think that The Hop might reduce or even stop bus service in Killeen.

However, city officials found an additional \$100,000 in their budget last year, allowing the Hill Country Transit District to maintain the regional bus system's current routes in Killeen.

While officials at Hill Country Transit remain concerned about funding going forward, they also want to improve the system with amenities that other transit systems take for granted.

Darrell Burtner is the director of urban operations for Hill Country Transit. He listed some of the improvements the transit district would make if some of their current funding could be diverted from route operations.

"(Some) of the things that we're lacking are ... electronic fare media," Burtner said. "Instead of stuffing a dollar in, we should be able to have an electronic card that we can swipe, or load up a credit card...similar to an EZ Tag on a windshield.

"Another thing I feel we desperately need is an app, so that some passenger standing out there in the sun, or at a shelter, can look and see, 'Oh, I've got 22 minutes before the bus is going to be here.'"

James Wickham, who works in the transit district's IT department and tracks statistics for The Hop, also wants to add a simple convenience for riders.

"We'd love to have USB ports for charging your phone while you're on the bus," Wickham said.

Another item on the wish list: electronic passenger counters.

"Right now, we're dependent upon the bus drivers counting their passengers getting on, getting off," Burtner said. "(With sensor technology), we could (automatically) count people."

Hill Country also has about 50 bus shelters currently waiting to be put at bus stops in the district. Burtner said he needs two things: a concrete pad on which to put them, and the money to put them out.

None of those amenities and services

are affordable right now, according to Burtner.

"We're contributing every dime we make ... to the basic routes," Burtner said. He said local contributions would have to increase before Hill Country can hope to begin any modernization projects.

In the meantime, Hill Country Transit continues to provide urban service to Copperas Cove, Killeen, Harker Heights, Belton and Temple, with a direct connector route providing stops in Harker Heights, Nolanville, Belton and Temple. The rural service covers over 9,000 square miles in nine counties including Milam, Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Mills, Lampasas, San Saba, Llano and Mason counties.

The HOP operates nine fixed routes that serve primarily as a connector route between major cities in the service area. Bus routes are indicated by numbered signs along area streets, and each bus stop has map and schedule information.

Urban services operate from approximately 5:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. weekdays. No weekend service is offered. The base bus fare for one-way travel on a fixed route is \$1.

A reduced fare of 50 cents is available for seniors 60 years or older; children 12 or younger; Medicare recipients, students and those with disabilities provided they have a discount card issued by The HOP. Monthly passes with unlimited rides are \$25. Rural fares may vary, and rural passengers should call The HOP for specific information. Riders must have the correct fare because drivers cannot make change.

Multiride tickets and monthly passes can be purchased at the Killeen City Library at 205 E. Church Ave. in Killeen, or they may be purchased in person or by mail through the Belton office.

Bus passes also can be purchased at Copperas Cove Library, at Harker Heights City Hall, at Temple City Hall, at the Temple Visitor's Center, and at Belton City Hall.

Route and schedule information is available at www.takethehop.com. For more information, call 254-933-3700, and select option 3 for customer service.



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Motorists drive through a construction zone on Interstate 14 in Nolanville.

I-35 nearly done, but years of work ahead for I-14

BY JACOB BROOKS
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

After years of work, the Interstate 35 reconstruction project in Bell County is pretty much done, while a similar project to widen Interstate 14 still has years of work ahead.

“Overall, the I-35 Reconstruction Project ... particularly in Waco, is continuing at an aggressive pace, well on track for a 2023 completion. Bell County work remains substantially complete with minor ‘punch list’ items such as completion of the Temple Welcome Monument and the standard establishment of vegetation along the corridor within the Temple/Troy area remaining, prior to final acceptance of the project,” Texas Department of Transportation spokesman Ken Roberts said in a recent email.

It’s all part of a longtime statewide project to widen I-35 to at least three lanes in each direction from San Antonio to Dallas.

For Bell County, a big part of the project was taking place in Temple from 2013 until last August, when Temple officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony signifying the end of major construction on the project.

When the I-35 plans were working their way through the state bureaucracy, Temple leadership saw it as an opportunity to improve the community’s look to the drivers and passengers of the 111,000 vehicles that travel through the city each day, officials said.

The Temple portion of the reconstruction project was 7.5 miles and cost \$241 million.

In May 2013, when construction was set to begin, it was the single largest contract ever for construction by the Waco District, that number has since been eclipsed by the 5.8-mile, \$341 million, I-35 reconstruction project now underway in Waco.

The multi-year project included widening the main lanes of the highway through Temple to four lanes in each direction, along with the rebuilding of all bridges, except South Loop 363 and North Loop 363, according to TxDOT.

INTERSTATE 14

A project to add a new lane in both directions of Interstate 14 from Harker Heights to Belton is estimated to cost about \$90 million and the work will be going for the next few years.

But the wider highway — used by thousands of motorists every day — is coming, and work is already underway.

The project to widen Interstate 14 to six lanes from Harker Heights to Interstate 35 in Belton will take years, and TxDOT has divided it into three phases.

Phase 1, a two-mile section of I-14 from Farm-to-Market 2410 in Harker Heights to FM 3423 (Indian Trail) was completed last year. The project cost about \$7.2 million.

Phase 2 started in the fall and spans more than 7 miles from Indian Trail in Harker Heights to FM 2410/Simmons Road in Belton. The project is costing

around \$45 million is expected to be done in the fall of 2021. The project is being constructed by J.D. Abrams LP of Austin.

Phase 3, the last phase of the I-14 expansion, from Simmons Road to I-35 in Belton, is tentatively scheduled to begin this fall, according to TxDOT. The estimated cost is \$38 million, and funding has been approved, Roberts said.

STATE HIGHWAY 195

An \$8.4 million project to repave State Highway 195 south of Killeen, and add turnaround lanes at a major intersection was recently completed with the exception of adding cable barriers for a portion of the highway, according to TxDOT.

The 13-mile project to add new asphalt on the highway from the intersection with Stan Schlueter Loop (Farm-to-Market 3470) to the Williamson County line began in August.

All lanes were resurfaced with a 1-inch overlay, making for a smoother ride.

The new turnaround lanes were installed under the overpass at the intersection of Highway 195 and Stan Schlueter Loop.

While technically not part of the same project, TxDOT also installed a new traffic signal in recent months at the intersection of Highway 195 and Chaparral Road. It is now the first traffic signal light motorists come to when arriving into Killeen along the highway from the south.

Janice Gibbs with FME News Service contributed to this report.

Water storage study underway

BY THADDEUS IMERMAN
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

A multigovernmental water storage study is underway to attempt to identify a location for a potential water storage facility to house excess water in Bell County. The storage process is called aquifer storage and recovery, or ASR for short.

An Austin-based company that examines natural resources — INTERA — is conducting the study, according to an FME report.

The study will be conducted over three phases, and Dirk Aaron, general manager of the Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District, said he hopes the first phase will be complete in the early part of April.

On board with the study are Bell County, Temple, the Brazos River Authority, the Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District, Water Control and Improvement District No. 1 and Fort Hood.

During phase one, Clearwater will provide INTERA with data from 10 potential sites for an ASR facility, the FME report said.

“They’re actually working on the project, because they have asked for a lot of the data that we keep,” Aaron said.

The data Clearwater is providing INTERA for the first phase includes well depths, driller’s logs, geoscience analyses and water quality.

“That was the number one step,” Aaron said about Clearwater’s meeting

with INTERA about the data.

All entities will reconvene at the end of each phase to see if they want to continue.

Aaron said INTERA officials told him they will likely call all entities together sooner than April, but they didn’t want to overpromise.

Much of the first phase, Aaron said, will be data analysis by INTERA.

“I can’t imagine them going out on a site other than until the second phase,” he said.

According to the FME report, the second phase will involve a narrowing of the potential site list.

“They’re doing the qualitative analysis on the front end,” Aaron said. “Quantitatively, they will look at what are the challenges from an infrastructure standpoint.”

Aaron said in the long run, he is confident the results of the study will give lawmakers and decision makers the necessary data to justify looking hard into an ASR facility.

Doing the study collectively instead of individually, Aaron said, speeds up the timeline by years.

Aaron said he is confident that there will be an ASR facility within 10 years. At this point, it is unknown whether it would be a county-wide facility or if each individual entity would have its own.

Currently, San Antonio, El Paso and Kerrville have ASR facilities. Corpus Christi, Victoria and New Braunfels are close to establishing one, the FME report said.



Water Control and Improvement District No. 1’s general manager, Ricky Garrett, left, discusses business with board members during a meeting in Killeen.

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NAACP, LULAC chapters reach out into the community

BY EMILY HILLEY-SIERZCHULA
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

Three organizations in Killeen continue to work in Central Texas to support the black and Latin-American communities.

NAACP KILLEEN BRANCH #6189

2020 is an exciting year for the Killeen branch of the NAACP, which was chartered on July 2, 1970.

“We’ll be celebrating our 50-year anniversary, which shows our sustainability and viability in this community and the surrounding areas,” said TaNeika Driver-Moultrie. “We’re the boldest civil rights organization.”

Outreach efforts for 2020 focus on education, economic development, voting rights and engagement, Census2020 and health disparities in the black and brown communities.

“The NAACP is important to me because I am a mother of two young black men and one young black girl, so I’ll always be a committed and dedicated freedom fighter,” Driver-Moultrie said. “We’re teaching our children to be future torchbearers so that they can continue the fight for justice and equality for all.”

The Killeen branch meets on the third Monday of every month at Greater Peace Missionary Baptist Church at 4201 Zephyr Road, starting at 5:30 p.m. with the executive board meeting and 7 p.m. for the general membership meeting.



Killeen branch NAACP president Taneika Driver-Moultrie addresses the crowd at Killeen City Hall after the Martin Luther King Jr. Day march.

Meetings are open to the public. Call 254-286-9211 or go to naacpkilleen.org.

LULAC HERENCIA COUNCIL 4297

“Our mission is to inspire, nurture, and support the educational attainment of members of the Hispanic community and elevate those in need while fostering leadership to do the same for future generations,” said Minerva D. Cotton, secretary of the Herencia Council. “We work in the community by assisting those in need wherever and whenever we can.”

The council is getting ready to host a few political forums for regional and local candidates, to include Killeen ISD school board and Killeen City Council.

The annual “My Heritage, My Legacy Gala” will be in March but the ladies

already are preparing for it by going through a series of classes such as etiquette, public speaking, conflict resolution, and also go on a visit to a college, Cotton said.

Monthly meetings are held at the Harker Heights Recreation Center on the second Monday of the month, from 6 to 8 p.m.

The organization posts regularly on its Facebook page: facebook.com/LULACHerenciaCouncil4297.

KILLEEN-FORT HOOD LULAC COUNCIL 4535

The oldest LULAC Council in Bell County is continuing in its 27th year to provide scholarships and classes in citizenship and ESL. The council hands out \$20,000 in scholarships each year, so students should see their counselors for more information.

The organization provides numerous outreaches into the community, including events such as Smiles for Vets on Feb. 21-22.

“We partnered with Texas Mission of Mercy and the Texas Dental Association Smile Foundation to provide dental services for any uninsured person,” said Myrna Malic-Banzon, secretary for the council’s foundation.

The LULAC Council 4535 Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, and all donations are fully tax deductible. For more information on scholarships, banquets, tickets or membership, call 1-800-KILLEEN or visit <http://www.killeenlulac4535.com>.



More than 80 people listened to the candidates of various state and county races at a LULAC forum.

Civic and conference center expects 900 events in 2020

BY MONIQUE BRAND
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

The Killeen Civic and Conference Center and Convention and Visitors Bureau continued to serve as a hub for tourism events in 2019 and another big year is in the works.

In 2019, the center hosted 861 events, which brought 142,112 guests through its doors, according to Kathie Mulheron, director of Killeen Civic & Conference Center — a slight increase from 2018 when the center held 741 events. This year, the center has 572 events scheduled with an overall goal of 900 events.

The center also hosts events for local partners such as the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce Flavors of Central Texas, H-E-B Regional meeting, Annual Killeen PRCA Rodeo, Killeen Rotary Livestock Show, the Central Texas Community Expo and the Killeen Daily Herald Bridal Show. The center also partnered with the City of Killeen to hold several events including the



Members of the Puerto Rican Kids Folklore Dance group perform traditional dances at the annual Sociedad Cultural Hispanoamericana event at the Killeen Civic and Conference Center.

library's Summer Reading Program and community, educational exhibits.

"We're increasing sales calls and making monthly visits with regional associations to attract them to Killeen," Mulheron said. "Working to increase awareness of Killeen through social media and print content and highlighting local businesses and attractions."

On the tourism side Mulheron said the bureau uses hotel room nights as a primary indicator on how many people visit the city. She added there was an 9.3% increase in revenue in FY19 than FY 18.

"There were 587,646 hotel room nights in FY 2019. Hotel occupancy tax revenue was \$1,810,718 ... FY 2018 (it was) \$1,655,595."

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Bell County Judge David Blackburn, center, votes with Commissioners Tim Brown, left, and John Driver during a meeting at the courthouse in Belton.

Staffing and jail focus of increased Bell County budget

BY THADDEUS IMERMAN
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Bell County officials recently began budget amendments for the FY20 budget. Bell County Judge David Blackburn said the amendment process is beginning earlier than normal.

“This year ... we’re going to try to do budget amendments on a quarterly basis, so that we can stay a little bit closer in tune with both our revenues and our expenses,” he said.

Comparing the FY19 budget, Blackburn said the adopted budget in mid-2018 was \$99,978,534. At the end of the fiscal year, the amended budget was \$103,357,884.

“It’s a significant change in our processes and in our policy and our philosophy,” Blackburn said.

The adopted budget for FY20, that passed 4-1 on Aug. 26, 2019, was \$107,020,040, which is a 3.42% increase in funds from the amended budget of FY19.

With the extra money, Blackburn said the county decided to address three broad categories — pay, staffing and non-personnel items.

“We did a 3% pay adjustment, across the board, for all 1,200-plus county employees,” he said. That cost the county about \$1.4 million.

“\$2.2 million was set aside to address jail staffing issues, and also to help with a county-wide compensation and benefits update,” Blackburn said.

The county-wide pay plan hadn’t been updated in nearly 20 years, according to Blackburn.

“The pay scales that we use for our positions ... that pay plan and those pay amounts have not been reviewed since 2001,” he said.

Along with addressing the pay scales, the county may add more positions. The Bell County Sheriff’s Department has just completed a jail staffing analysis.

“That jail staffing analysis will likely lead to additional positions, I believe,” Blackburn said.

The expected additions to the jail staff are not the only additions for the county. Thirteen new employees were added across the county.

Blackburn said he believes there is a correlation between the need for additional county employees and the growing population of the county.

When county departments ask for new employees or new positions, usually it means the workload has increased, he said.

Blackburn said when the census numbers from 2020 are released, he expects the county population to be

above 386,000.

The county designated an additional \$2.1 million to non-personnel items, such as medical service contracts at the jail, mental health service contracts at the jail, emergency service vehicles and information technology upgrades. “That contract for medical services increased by \$1.2 million,” Blackburn said.

The county replaced 16 vehicles in the Bell County Sheriff’s Department and eight vehicles in other departments across the county.

Finally, a little more than \$300,000 went to software upgrades in the county.

Overall, the health of the Bell County economy is very strong, Blackburn said. The county has about a five-month reserve of operating funds, and the county continues to receive strong bond ratings.

“Standard & Poor’s said, ‘We view the county’s management as very strong with strong financial policies and practices,’” Blackburn said.

The planning for the FY21 budget will be met with some challenges, however.

“One of the significant challenges that we face in FY21 is the new revenue cap that has been imposed by the Legislature on cities and counties,” Blackburn said. “That new revenue cap is at 3.5%.”

Unemployment rate falls as Killeen-Temple area grows

BY THADDEUS IMERMAN
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

The Killeen-Temple metro area — which includes Bell, Coryell and Lampasas counties — ended 2019 with a lower unemployment rate than 2018. The rate was 3.4% at the end of 2019, as opposed to 4.0% at the end of 2018, according to Charley Ayres, director of industry and education partners with Workforce Solutions of Central Texas.

Of all job industries in the area, the two with the largest growth were education and health services and construction.

A growth rate of 8.5% was observed in the education and health services industry, Ayres said, while the construction industry had a growth rate of 6%.

Ayres said a couple factors could be contributing to the growth in those areas and subsequent drop in overall unemployment. He said he believes the increase of construction and education jobs may be due to the growth in Bell County, particularly Killeen. “Kind of that south Killeen area, headed back toward Harker Heights and the lake ... that’s developing so quick,” Ayres said. “You still have a lot of growth even in Harker Heights area.”

A recent study by RKG Associates Inc. of Alexandria, Virginia, indicated that the Killeen population may reach near 180,000 by 2030, driving the development boom. The demographics of area is what is fueling the increase in health

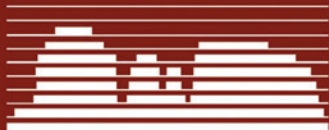
UNEMPLOYMENT NUMBERS

	Killeen-Temple	Texas
January 2019	4.6%	4.2%
February 2019	4.2%	3.9%
March 2019	3.8%	3.5%
April 2019	3.2%	3.0%
May 2019	3.1%	2.9%
June 2019	3.8%	3.6%
July 2019	4.0%	3.7%
August 2019	3.8%	3.6%
September 2019	3.6%	3.3%
October 2019	3.5%	3.3%
November 2019	3.5%	3.3%
December 2019	3.4%	3.3%

services of jobs, Ayres said. “The health services are directly related to just the aging population. You know, baby boomers are getting older and older; they need more medicine.”

Across all industries, the average wage for someone in the metro area is \$23.70 an hour, according to Workforce Solutions. The average entry level wage is \$13.91 an hour, and the average experienced wage is \$28.57.

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Several new businesses opened in Killeen and Heights

BY THADDEUS IMERMAN
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

More than 500 new businesses opened in Killeen in 2019, according to the Texas comptroller's office. Not all of the businesses are brick-and-mortar establishments; some are small business being operated out of the owner's home.

The numbers are based on the new active sales tax permits filed in 2019, provided by the Texas comptroller's office.

Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce President John Crutchfield said the numbers are an indication of the health of the market.

"Growth in permits really follows growth in the market," he said.

The continually growing population means that the market is getting bigger. During the census this year, Killeen is expected to have a population of more than 150,000 residents.

A steady growth rate means the population could be close to 180,000 by 2030, according to the Killeen Planning and Development Services Department.

"One of the things we've always had is a stable economy," Crutchfield said.

Even though there has been a fluctuation in the market with businesses coming and going, Crutchfield said he thinks the Killeen market is in a good place.

Helping drive the success of the Killeen market is its location, according to Crutchfield.

With the improved highway system and continued growth, Crutchfield said the Killeen market has products that people will travel for, something he called "destination retail."

Overall, the retail market is undergoing what Crutchfield said is a paradigm shift.

BUYER'S MARKET

Because of the wealth of knowledge on the internet, it is no longer a seller's market, but a buyer's market, he said. What that means is that buyers are not reliant on sellers for information.

"I mean, when I buy a car now, I already know what I want," Crutchfield said. "I know the features I want, I know

about what it's going to sell for and I know what I can get for my trade-in."

Crutchfield said he thinks retailers such as H-E-B and Walmart are adapting to the change.

"They recognize that it's a buyer's market, so they're making it easier for buyers to buy products from them," he said.

KILLEEN OPENINGS

Of the new businesses in Killeen, some were restaurants, offering tasty options for hungry patrons.

Some of the notable openings in Killeen included Raising Cane's, I Love Sushi and Band of Brothers BBQ.

Raising Cane's opened in Killeen on Sept. 4 as the line of people waiting to get in wrapped around the building. The chicken finger restaurant opened at 1035 S. Fort Hood St. That is the same location that two other fast food restaurants — Whataburger and Sure Fire Tacos and Tortilla Grill — once stood.

I Love Sushi opened in 2019 at the Solomon Palace plaza, 1103 W. Veterans Memorial Blvd., Suite 101.

Run by former "Iron Chef America" contestant Phillip Snowda, I Love Sushi features traditional Japanese cuisine in a brightly lit dining room.

Snowda, who hails from Japan, has 40 years experience in the culinary industry.

Band of Brothers BBQ opened up shop on Nov. 22. Owner and pitmaster James Crawford said he prides himself in "keeping it old school."

Crawford said he cooks his meat over oak wood. The restaurant is located at 1100 Lowes Blvd.

Restaurants were not the only new businesses in Killeen in 2019. Residents looking to buy a new car were given another option when CarMax opened May 15 at 3504 E. Central Texas Expressway.

The used car dealership is the 21st CarMax in Texas. The Killeen lot has a capacity for 140 used vehicles and employed 15 people at its opening.

Killeen Closures

It was not all good news for Killeen shoppers, however. In 2019, the city lost

some giants in the retail, restaurant and grocery industries.

Some of the notable closures were the IGA Foodliner on Rancier Avenue and the H-E-B on North Gray Street. The two longstanding grocery stores closed within months of each other, sending shockwaves to residents in north Killeen.

IGA closed at the end of August after decades of service to north Killeen. A grocery store had been in the location since the 1970s when it was originally a Piggly Wiggly.

IGA's store owner, John Benson, said the store couldn't turn a profit with most of its clientele doing their shopping at one of the then-three H-E-Bs.

Less than one month later, H-E-B announced it would close its store on North Gray Street in Killeen.

Store officials said the reasons for closing the north Killeen location was changing market conditions and extensive repairs needed.

The two closures gave shoppers only two grocery options north of Interstate 14, Delicias Meat Market, 1001 E. Veterans Memorial Blvd. and O-Mart, 714 S. Fort Hood St.

Crutchfield said getting a new grocer in north Killeen is not a quick fix.

"Fundamentally, it sends the signal that the demand is not there," he said of the closures.

A remedy of the lack of grocery stores would require a developer to accept the risk, Crutchfield said.

Two notable closures in the retail and restaurant industries were Sears and Hooters. Both locations, however, have been slated for new or expanding businesses.

Sears, the first businesses in the Killeen Mall to open in 1981, shuttered its doors in March. The corporate offices filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in October 2018 and announced it would close nearly one-third of its Sears and Kmart stores.

In December, the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce announced that Dillard's purchased the vacant spot and will use it for its Ladies and Home departments, moving those departments



Raising Cane's general manager Chris Hill prepares to cut the ribbon at the Killeen restaurant's grand opening.

from another spot in the mall. The new portion of Dillard's opened in mid January, according to mall receptionist Ardala Wilson.

Hooters, the restaurant known for its wings and short shorts, closed in July after 14 years of business.

The location was not on the market long, however. In mid-November, a sign advertised a coming restaurant called Pier 7 Juicy Seafood & Bar.

An opening date for the new restaurant has not been announced, but changes to the outside of the building give it a new look.

Gone is the iconic orange of Hooters, now replaced by a shade of blue.

SALES TAX

The sales tax revenue in both Harker Heights and Killeen are both trending upward, according to the Texas comptroller's website.

To date in January, Killeen's sales tax revenue is 3.4% higher than it was at this point in 2019.

Data from the comptroller's website shows the total sales tax revenue for 2019 increased by 4.84% from 2018. When comparing month-by-month for the two years, the sales tax revenue in Killeen increased in all, except November.

Crutchfield said he thinks data needs to be analyzed over a longer period of time to reach conclusions on what might

be driving the increases.

"You really look for trends," he said. "In our case, our population continues to grow. We've got an excellent highway system."

Crutchfield said that when people travel for the big purchases, such as cars, they stay and purchase other products before leaving the market.

As of 2018, the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the median household income in Killeen was \$50,418.

HARKER HEIGHTS

The Harker Heights retail market is going strong also, according to Gina Pence, president and CEO of the Harker Heights Chamber of Commerce.

Pence said the retail market has seen growth and sales tax revenue increases.

Harker Heights observed an 8.9% increase in sales tax revenue in 2019, when compared to 2018. The city has also seen an increase of 8.48% in sales tax revenue in January, compared to January 2019, according to the Texas comptroller's website.

One of the things driving the revenue increases, Pence said, is the demographics of the city.

The median household income for the city of Harker Heights is \$72,473. That number is 28% higher than the median income for Bell County and 22% higher than the median income for the state,

Pence said.

"Harker Heights citizens have a higher percentage of expendable income and are looking to purchase specialty items and experience local flavors that our businesses are offering," Pence said via email.

The Texas Comptroller's office issued more than 100 sales tax permits for Harker Heights in 2019.

Of them, two new restaurants that opened not far from each other were Dunkin' and Church's Chicken.

Dunkin', which jointly operates Baskin-Robbins, had a soft opening at 529 Knights Way on July 16. It was the third in the area. One opened on Fort Hood in June 2015, and one opened in Killeen Jan. 9 on Clear Creek Road.

The store, known for its donuts and coffee, held a grand opening on Aug. 10. Many people showed up, with the line often stretching from the counter to the door.

Church's Chicken opened at nearby 670 Knights Way on July 25.

At the time of its opening, the store employed 30 people.

"We looked at Harker Heights as a city that didn't have one of our restaurants and it was an up and coming community with a lot of growth potential," said Mike Collins, president of Ampler Chicken that franchises Church's Chicken.

Killeen chamber helps area businesses connect

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

The following questions were put to Jennifer Hetzel, director of research for the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce:

What are the major achievements of the chamber in the past year?

14 Forward continued its work to establish a research park at Texas A&M University-Central Texas. To that end, the first University Research Park Summit was held in August 2019. Speakers from the private sector, education and the military spoke about the importance of a research park for the community and how to make it happen. Out of the research park planning, the concept of an Innovation District has emerged, which would cover a larger geographic area and include regional talent and business development. This concept is still being explored.

In December the results of a Growth Study commissioned by 14 Forward and other community partners were released to the public. The purpose of the study was to analyze population and housing trends in the city of Killeen, Killeen Independent School District and surrounding region. The results indicate steady growth and outline the reasons for this growth, as well as projections as to where it will continue in the future. The full study and presentation can be viewed at killeenchamber.com/forward.

What new programs and initiatives has the chamber added in the past year?

The chamber transitioned to a new membership software system, Zoho. Zoho will allow the chamber to use data to help us keep in touch with our members through email, surveys, event accessibility and billing will become easier for members to navigate.

Another significant change was the restructuring of the Greater Killeen Young Professionals. The group, formed in 2008, has served as a way to connect professionals just starting in their career, those new to the area, and those looking to grow their network. GKYP will relaunch in February 2020 with new programs focused on I Serve, I Develop



Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce staff and volunteers visit Urban Air during a “Pop-In Days” visit in June.

and I Involve.

What awards and recognitions did the chamber present at its membership banquet?

- Welcome Council Member of the Year - Joe DeCrose with Crawford-Bowers Funeral Home
- Non-Profit of the Year — Boys & Girls Club-Central Texas
- Small Business of the Year — Nothing Bundt Cakes Harker Heights
- Large Business of the Year — Patriot Buick GMC
- Roy J. Smith Award Winner — Pat Kauffman

How many members does the chamber have at present, and what programs has the chamber implemented to grow membership?

Current membership is 623
Growing membership is really a multi-pronged tool. Nichole Anderson, our Membership Relations Manager is constantly meeting new businesses and growing our members.

Jasmine Suino, our Investor Services Program manager, is reaching out to current members to make sure we are helping them in all of the ways that are the most important to them. During her interviews with our current members she asks them if they would refer us

to their fellow businesses and then we are able to grow through current relationships too.

Multiple programs are in place to help us grow, including many networking events, like our Third Thursday Mixers, Flash Networking, but even events that aren't typical networking events are great ways for us to find new members, like our ribbon cutting ceremonies, Young Professionals program and even event based leadership growth days like Leadercast.

What major initiatives and programs are planned in the coming year?

We are really striving to serve our members fully and make sure we are hearing from each of them. We will continue our networking events, luncheons offered by the Military Relations and Public Policy Councils, Annual Banquet, opportunities to serve on councils, opportunities to give back to the community through the Young Professionals.

Leadercast Live will offer world-class leadership training right here in Killeen on May 21 and advance registration is required.

Flavors of Central Texas will be restructured this year, so stay tuned for details.

Several businesses join Killeen, Heights chambers in 2019

HARKER HEIGHTS

- Cajun Boiling Crab, 572 E. Central Texas Expressway
- Juicy Joy Deli & Coffee, 110 Farm-to-Market Road 2410
- Wong's Chinese Kitchen, 420 E. Farm-to-Market Road 2410
- Healthy Addiction, 716 Indian Trail, Suite 170
- Sprinkles on Top Ice Cream Shop, 302 Millers Crossing, Suite 1
- Church's Chicken, 670 E. Knights Way
- Dunkin', 529 E. Knights Way
- A+ Salon Suites: 301 E. Knights Way
- Coyotes FC
- Basin RV Park, 10502 Farm-to-Market Road 2410, Belton
- Deka Lash, 201 E. Central Texas Expressway, Suite 1350
- New Heights CBD, 101 W. Farm-to-Market Road 2410, Suite B
- Southern Grace Salon & Boutique, 302 Millers Crossing, Suite 2
- Electrifying Photo Booth
- The Diamond Dynasty 7, 600 Indian Trail, Suite 105
- MK Results LLC

KILLEEN

- Aerial Photography Services
- Band of Brothers BBQ, 1100 Lowes Blvd., Suite 400
- Butterflies Prospering Wellness Co., 3300 E. Central Texas Expressway
- CarMax, 3504 E. Central Texas Expressway
- Cedar Crest Outpatient Clinic, 2206 E. Central Texas Expressway
- Church's Chicken-Amplifier Chicken LLC
- Clinton Brown Realtor
- Dunkin', 2250 Clear Creek Road
- Farmers Insurance - Bridges Agency, 3045 Stillhouse Lake Road, Harker Heights
- Firestone Complete Auto Care
- Galaxies Express Car Wash, 1300 E. Stan Schlueter Loop
- Goosehead-Becky Isbell, 312 N. Gray St.
- Head 2 Toe Wellness, 1002 E. Elms Road, Suite 111
- Hyde Estates, 4600 Cunningham Road
- International Cognitive Care Providers Association
- I-Train University, 1001 E. Veterans Memorial Blvd., Suite 401
- Jackson Todd & Lambert, PLLC, 400

- W. Jasper Road, Suite 200
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- LessStress Link, LLC
- Let's Cook Texas, 207 E. Ave. D
- Let's Eat Texas, 207 E. Avenue D
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- Lorenz & Lorenz, L.L.P. - Killeen office
- Luxé Salon and Spa Suites, 1805 Florence Road, Suite 10
- Mathnasium of Killeen, 2201 S. W.S. Young Drive, Suite 112-A
- MGC Pure Chemicals America, 4405 Roy J. Smith Drive
- MGC Pure Chemicals America, Inc., 4405 Roy J. Smith Drive
- MK Results, LLC.
- MorningStar Management, 4201 W. Stan Schlueter Loop, Suite B
- Ol' Girl's Lounge, 403 E. Stan Schlueter Loop, Suite 308
- Olive Branch: An Acton Academy, LLC, 4008 E. Stan Schlueter Loop, Suite 105
- Overstock Furniture, 2500 E. Central Texas Expressway
- Peking Restaurant, 1310 W. Stan Schlueter Loop, Suite A200
- Phil's Service, 503 S. Second St.
- Phoenix Provider Services, LLC
- Premier Fence & Deck, 1419 S. Fort Hood St.
- PT Solutions Physical Therapy, 2300 S. Clear Creek Road, Suite 102
- Quantegy LLC
- R and R Events Planning and More
- Raising Cane's, 1035 S. Fort Hood St.
- SignatureCare ER, 800 W. Central

- Texas Expressway
- Solix Inc., 402 E. Ave. D
- Stable Life Concepts, LLC, 5610 E. Central Texas Expressway
- State Farm - Shaffin Wegener, 112 S.W. HK Dodgen Loop, Temple
- State Farm Insurance - Kalynn Tindall, 510 S. Second St.
- Strayer University, 218 E. Ave. D
- Studio 6 Plus Killeen Ft. Hood/ Days Inn, 1502 W. Central Texas Expressway
- Taj Indian Restaurant & Bar, 803 E. Central Texas Expressway
- Texas Home Health Hospice
- Texas Tonix, 2408 Clear Creek Road
- Thayer Point Apartments, 5002 Thayer Drive
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Daily Herald enters 130th year as local news provider

BY DAVE MILLER
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

As it enters its 130th year in operation, the Daily Herald continues to look for new ways to provide readers with the latest news and information.

As part of the multifaceted KDH Media Group, the Herald serves the fast-growing Central Texas community with an award-winning daily publication, as well as online at kdhnews.com and on a variety of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

In addition, the Herald provides targeted coverage of nearby communities with two weekly papers, the Copperas Cove Herald and Harker Heights Herald. The Herald also offers additional, in-depth coverage of the nation's largest military installation with a third weekly publication, the Fort Hood Herald.

The Herald continues to offer features to enhance reader engagement, including a daily Facebook poll, a weekly online poll and live-streaming of selected public events via Facebook Live and Twitter.

A new app, launched early this year, gives users instant access to the Herald's latest online offerings via their phone, tablet or other mobile device. The app is available for free download via the Apple App Store and Google Play.

The Herald also offers a text alert system, providing readers with the latest breaking local news via text message to their mobile device.

When breaking news occurs, readers who have registered receive a text informing them of the news and linking them to the full story at kdhnews.com.

In addition to its in-depth reporting in the areas of municipal government, public education and military developments, the Herald continues to offer dynamic coverage of local, county and state elections.

The Herald annually conducts candidate forums involving high-profile local races as part of its in-depth political coverage. In addition, the Herald offers candidate bios, video interviews, issue-oriented Q&As and election information on all local races



The Killeen Daily Herald is on Florence Road.

of interest at its politics site, kdhnews.com/centerforpolitics.

The Herald's commitment to timely, thorough coverage, solid writing, insightful analysis and compelling design has earned the paper recognition in the industry.

The Herald has been named Newspaper of the Year in its circulation class three times since 2011 by the Associated Press Managing Editors, with the latest award coming in 2018.

The paper took second-place honors in 2009, 2010 and 2012.

In addition, the paper has been honored in 2016 and 2017 for its investigative reporting with TAPME's Star Investigative Report of the Year, the top award for the paper's circulation category.

The paper also received three consecutive Star awards for Opinion Writing in 2016, 2017 and 2018, as well as the top statewide award across all circulation categories in 2017.

Between 2015 and 2019, the Texas Associated Press Managing Editors have honored the Herald with 72 awards for outstanding reporting, news analysis, photography and design.

The Herald continues to tackle issues of importance to Central Texans.

Over the last year, the Herald continued its reporting on the impact of burn pits on soldiers during

deployments to the Middle East and Africa.

The Herald did extensive followup reporting on the Killeen school district's \$426 million bond election that voters approved in 2018, exploring its impact on district taxpayers. The Herald also reported on the potential tax burden of a second, \$265 million school bond, which will go before voters in May.

Also last year, the Herald took a close look at the regional water district, as it moved toward the opening of a new \$50 million treatment plant, expanded district boundaries and regular board elections this fall.

Other segments of KDH Media Group also expanded their offerings during the past year. KDH Digital Services and the Herald's commercial printing service, KDH Printing, continued to provide a wide array of products and services.

In conjunction with the Temple Daily Telegram, the Herald also publishes a regional magazine called *Tex Appeal*. Now entering its ninth year of publication, the high-gloss publication features profiles of individuals, groups and businesses that make an impact in their communities.

The Herald has evolved far beyond its roots as a weekly newspaper serving a small cotton-farming town prior to the arrival of Camp Hood in 1942.

The community has changed dramatically in the ensuing 78 years, and the Herald has grown and changed along with it, keeping pace with the needs of the growing region.



As the longest continually operating business in Killeen, the Daily Herald remains a trusted source for news and information for residents across Central Texas.

"It is exciting to be a part of the growth and development of our area," said Sue Mayborn, the Herald's editor and publisher. "We take very seriously our role and responsibility of being a credible news source.

"Through our in-depth news coverage and our strong emphasis on local news, we continue to strive to give our readers the information they need to make informative decisions on matters affecting their lives."

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Market Selector

Local Association
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Market Type
City/Local Market Area

Market Name
Killeen

Frequency
Monthly

Date
December 2019

Property Type
All (SF, Condo, Townhouse)

Construction Type
All (Existing & New)

December 2019 Market Statistics - Killeen

Median Price
\$145,000
▲ 12.7% YoY

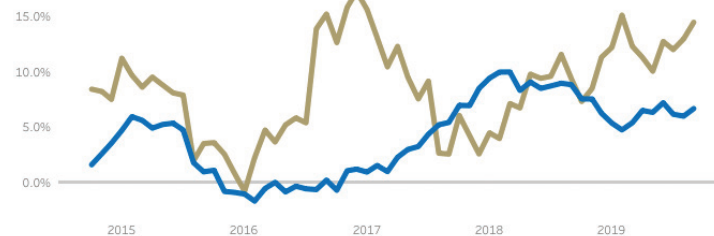
Closed Sales
200
▲ 13.6% YoY

Active Listings
305
▼ -21.6% YoY

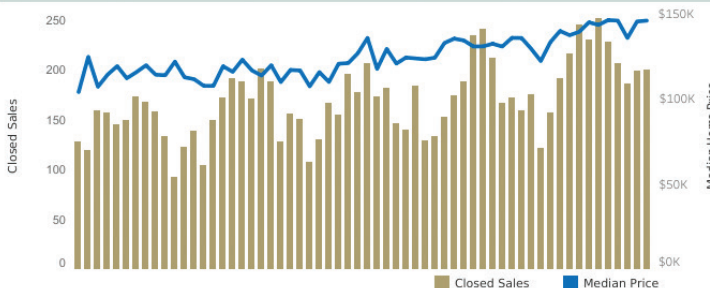
Months Inventory
1.5
▼ -0.7 YoY



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CLOSED AND MEDIAN PRICE HISTORY



PRICE DISTRIBUTION

< \$100k	17.6%
\$100-199k	69.2%
\$200-299k	11.2%
\$300-399k	2.1%
\$400-499k	0.0%
\$500-749k	0.0%
\$750-999k	0.0%
\$1M +	0.0%

HOME VALUATION STATS

Median Price/Sq Ft
\$82.83
▲ 6.6% YoY

Median Home Size
1,656 sq ft

Median Year Built
2003

Close/Original List
97.3%

TRANSACTION TIME STATS

Days on Market
46
18 days less than December 2018

Days to Close
32
1 day more than December 2018

Total Days
78
17 days less than December 2018



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Hundreds of new homes going up in area cities

BY ARTIE PHILLIPS

KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Thayer Point, an “upscale” multifamily apartment complex next to Killeen Nursing & Rehabilitation on Stan Schlueter Loop and Thayer Drive, officially opened for residents in 2019.

The initial buildings were finished between February and April of 2019 and were listed for rent shortly after construction was completed.

The apartment complex has a mix of one- and two-bedroom units with 650- and 966-square-foot options.

In September 2018, the city planning and zoning commission recommended by a 6-0 vote a redrawing of the second phase of the complex to add 72 new units to the overall plan — bringing the total to 260 units.

Contractors built nearly 700 new single-family homes last year in Killeen.

Contractors have been building new homes at a steady pace, constructing a total of 693 new houses in 2019, which is nearly the same number as the year before, according to city permit data.

In 2018, 697 new single-family homes were built in the city.

In 2017, 611 homes were built.

Houses in Killeen were selling at a similar pace in December as they were at the same time last year. Homes spent an average of 46 days on the market, 18 days less than they were in December 2018, according to data from the Fort Hood Area Association of Realtors. The association did not have December or year-end sales numbers available.

Currently, Killeen has a housing inventory of just 1.5 months, down

from 2.2 months in December 2018.

Housing inventory — which is defined as how long it would take before all active listings are sold if housing prices remained static — has seen a drop in Killeen since 2011, which had a high of 9.1 months of inventory, according to information obtained from the Texas A&M Real Estate Center.

There were also 200 home closings in Killeen in December, up 13% from the same time last year.

Contractors also constructed a total of 80 new duplexes in the city over the course of 2019.

It is no longer possible to calculate the construction value of the new housing projects, as cities are now prevented from asking for projected values when determining permit fees under Texas

Continued on page 32



Thayer Point, an “upscale” multifamily apartment complex at Stan Schlueter Loop and Thayer Drive, officially opened for residents in 2019.

Continued from page 31

House Bill 852, which was passed over the summer.

This bill amends the Texas Local Government Code to prohibit municipalities from using the valuation or construction cost of a residential dwelling to determine the amount of permit or inspection fees charged.

This new law also prevents municipalities from requiring disclosure of information related to the valuation or construction cost of a residential dwelling as a condition for obtaining a building permit, unless required for FEMA National Flood

Insurance Program participation.

COPPERAS COVE

While not to the magnitude of construction in Killeen, contractors in Copperas Cove have nonetheless continued building new homes at a steady pace. According to permit reports from the city, 108 permits for new single-family residences were issued in 2019.

The city of Copperas Cove has a housing inventory of just 1.5 months, down from the full 2 months of inventory available in December 2018. There were 55 closed sales on homes in December 2019 as well, up 7.8% from the same time last year.

The city also issued 14 permits for the construction of new duplexes in 2019.

HARKER HEIGHTS

Residential construction continued at a steady pace through 2019, resulting in 151 permits being filed for the construction of new single-family residences. Harker Heights has a housing inventory of 2.1 months, down from 2.6 months of inventory available in December 2018. There were 44 closed sales on homes in December 2019 as well, up 29.4% from the same time last year.

The city also issued 25 permits for the construction of new duplexes in 2019.



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Construction is underway on a new strip mall in Harker Heights to make room for more businesses.

Commercial permits issued in Central Texas communities

BY ARTIE PHILLIPS

KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Several new business and other properties are making their way to Killeen in the near future, with a variety of business permits being issued in 2019. The combined value of all new commercial permits is \$99.99 million.

Some of the biggest construction projects that started in 2019 were actually new school buildings in the Killeen Independent School District.

KISD broke ground on the new high school on Chaparral Road. The high school is set to open in the fall of 2022.

The district also kicked off the projects from the 2018 bond issue, in which voters approved \$426 million in construction projects.

The projects include, East Ward/West Ward Elementary Consolidation Campus, Clifton Park/Bellaire Elementary, Sugar Loaf/Pershing Park Elementary, High School #6 and Elementary School #36.

In the northeast part of the city, the MGC Pure Chemicals America Inc. plant is preparing to expand. Permits for buildings 3 and 4 were permitted for construction in late August, worth a combined total of \$12.28 million.

The school district is not alone in preparing new buildings for a growing population. Faith Point Church in Killeen filed several permits in August for the construction of a 500-seat, 15,000-square-foot auditorium and other

facilities, including a day-care center, counseling center, athletic center, baseball field and amphitheater with 750 seats. The four permits for construction of the new building have a total value of \$4.86 million.

HARKER HEIGHTS

There were 12 permits issued for the construction of new commercial businesses in the city last year worth a combined total value of \$2.05 million.

One of the new business to pop up in the city is OrangeTheory Fitness, a new exercise gym located at 3045 Stillhouse Lake Road. The construction permit was valued at \$350,000.

A few new restaurants are coming to the city, and some have already arrived according to the city's permit report including:

- Raising Cane's
 - Dunkin Donuts
 - Arepitas new location
- Other new businesses include:
- Central Texas Heating & Air
 - Anthony Joseph Jewelers
 - Deka Lash
 - Amy's Attic #2

The commercial demand for lots in Harker Heights is illustrated by the permits pulled over the past three years.

In 2017, commercial permits had a reported valuation of \$3.3 million. 2018's reported commercial valuation was \$6.3 million.

In 2019, the commercial reported valuation is at \$46.4 million — the

largest portion of that is the new Killeen Independent School District middle school on Warrior's Path.

The city continues to work with The Retail Coach, which is the city's retail recruiter, to lure businesses to town.

COPPERAS COVE

Over the course of 2019, Copperas Cove permit officials issued commercial permits worth more than several thousand dollars.

It is no longer possible to calculate the construction value of multiple new construction projects, as cities are now prevented from asking for projected values when determining permit fees under Texas House Bill 852, which was signed into law over the summer.

This bill amends the Texas Local Government Code to prohibit municipalities from using the valuation or construction cost of a residential dwelling to determine the amount of permit or inspection fees charged.

This new law also prevents municipalities from requiring disclosure of information related to the valuation or construction cost of a residential dwelling as a condition for obtaining a building permit, unless required for FEMA National Flood Insurance Program participation.

The city permit office changed the way it reports permit filings in August, making it difficult to calculate permit values for new projects planned in Copperas Cove.

Killeen-Temple area homes see sizable increase in value

BY ARTIE PHILLIPS
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Home values in the Killeen area saw a 12.7 percent year-over-year increase at the end of 2019, according to data obtained from the Fort Hood Area Association of Realtors.

The average home price in the Killeen area was \$145,000 in December of 2019, up from \$126,585 the year before. There were 200 sale closings in the area in December 2019. That was up from 173 homes sold in December 2018. The total months of inventory December was just 1.5 months, down from 2.2 months of inventory in December 2018.

The average home spent 46 days on the market, 18 less days than in December 2018.

Traditionally, area home values since



New homes are under construction on Achille Drive in Harker Heights.

2000 have been mostly flat as they just keep pace with inflation. There is plenty of new construction, which generates an ample supply of inventory to keep up with the housing demand.

Killeen survived the 2008 housing crash relatively unscathed because home values had not climbed anywhere nearly as dramatically as they had in places like Florida, California and Nevada. Foreclosures are still prevalent in the area but dropping.

The average home price across all of Texas was \$248,000 in December 2019, an increase of 5.5% over \$234,360 in December 2018. On average, homes across Texas spent 64 days on the market, one day less than they spent on the market in December 2018. There were 29,010 closed home sales across Texas in December, up 12.5% from December 2018. Statewide, the total months of housing inventory was 3.1, down just 0.1 months from the same time last year.

The average price of a home in Bell County was \$171,375 in December 2019, which was up 8.8% from \$156,294 in December 2018.

The average home in Copperas Cove is valued at \$123,000, a decrease of 15.2% from this time last year.

Houses spent an average of 61 days on the market in Copperas Cove, just six days longer than they spent in December 2018.

The average property value for a home in Nolanville is \$234,950, a drastic increase of 45.6% from \$127,812 the year before. The average list price per square foot in Nolanville is \$115.7, which is higher than the Killeen average of \$82.83.

The average property value in Gatesville is \$150,000, tied for lowest property value in the area with Lampasas.

The Harker Heights average property value is \$203,500. That's a 10.9% increase from last year.

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Churches embark on construction projects to serve congregations

HERALD STAFF REPORTS

In the past year, several Killeen-area churches embarked on construction projects to enlarge their existing structures or to build new ones for their congregations.

CORNERSTONE BAPTIST

On Aug. 24, about 250 people turned out for an ribbon-cutting for the new Cornerstone Baptist Church, 484 Farm-to-Market 3219 in Harker Heights.

Participating were Pastor Dr. Ed Wagner and his wife, Veronica, plus the charter members of Cornerstone Baptist Church that included Lloyd and Brenda Coley, Gene and Sheila Curtis, Luther and Edith Benjamin and Willie Gregory.

The new facility seats 750 people. The former church, south of the new facility, became the Family Life Center.

BIBLE WAY BAPTIST

On Feb. 2, dozens of church members from Bible Way Missionary Baptist Church and several prominent community members took part in the groundbreaking and dedication of a new Family Life Center for the Copperas Cove church. The guest speaker during the service preceding the event was Pastor Willie E. Robertson from Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in Temple. Texas state Rep. J. D. Sheffield and Copperas Cove Mayor Bradi Diaz were among the honored guests in attendance. Bible Way Missionary



Faith Point Church is building a campus on Stagecoach Road in Killeen.

Baptist is at 2306 S. Farm-to-Market 116 in Copperas Cove.

FAITH POINT CHURCH

Construction began for the new Faith Point Church worship campus at 1826 Stagecoach Road, Killeen, in fall 2019. Situated on the 17-acre property, the campus is being constructed in two phases, according to senior pastor Scott Hoxworth.

The first phase will include a 500-person sanctuary, a shade structure in the center of the campus, a coffee shop called Heis Coffee, a children's ministry building and a youth ministry building.

Phase two will include administration offices, a wedding chapel, counseling offices, a softball field and an outdoor amphitheater.

Hoxworth said phase one is estimated to be complete in August. Larry Weiss Construction of Killeen is in charge of completing the project. Hoxworth and the church hired Brad Oaster, owner of Oaster Development, LLC in Colorado Springs, Colorado as the consultant/developer.

Currently, Faith Point meets in a mobile setting at the Boys & Girls Club, Woody Hall Unit, at 5100 Trimmier Road. Hoxworth said the church sold its property at 3504 E. Central Texas Expressway in 2017 in order to pursue construction at a new location that would allow the church to fulfill its mission and vision within the community.

GREATER VISION COMMUNITY CHURCH

In February 2019, Greater Vision Community Church dedicated a new family life center, which officially opened for use in April.

The building has a full-size basketball court, 13 classrooms, a kitchen, a stage and plenty of other rooms and features.

Several local and state representatives were in attendance for the ceremony, including District 54 state Rep. Brad Buckley and Killeen Mayor Jose Segarra.

Once the dedication service ended, Pastor David Reynolds and his wife led the attendees into the Family Life Center to give them a small tour and a chance to look around the nearly-finished building.

The church is at 2000 E. Stan Schlueter Loop in Killeen.

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HARKER HEIGHTS

Traffic projects lead improvements in Harker Heights

BY HUNTER KING AND DAVE MILLER
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Three major traffic projects took center stage in Harker Heights in 2019 — a new roundabout traffic circle and the widening of two major highways.

The roundabout traffic feature opened in late April on Commercial Drive, at the eastern side of the Walmart parking lot. It was formally dedicated in August.

The one-way, circular intersection, allows traffic to flow counterclockwise around a center island, easing congestion that had built up at the former four-way intersection.

The \$859,600 project took almost four years to complete because of right-of-way issues, weather delays and other factors. However, it proved its value over the holiday shopping season, facilitating smooth traffic flow in the retail area.

The widening of Interstate 14 through the majority of Harker Heights also was completed in 2019. The \$7.2 million Phase 1 stretches from the Harker Heights city limits to the west to the Indian Trail overpass on the east.

Phase 2 is now underway and will continue to the top of Nolanville Hill.

The third highway project involved widening FM 2410/Knights Way from Commercial to the Killeen city limits.

The \$6.8 million project included a center left-turn lane and two traffic lanes plus sidewalks. The project also featured concrete sound-abatement walls along two sections of the roadway.

The city marked a milestone on Dec. 2 when Cindy Hicks, a 25-year veteran of the Harker Heights Fire Department, became the first female deputy chief. Her promotion followed the retirement of Deputy Chief Glenn Gallenstein, who served the city for 27 years.

The city started the year on an inauspicious note, with a large sewage



The city improved traffic flow with a roundabout on Commercial Drive near Walmart.

spill that dumped 352,000 gallons of sewage in early January. It happened at the city's Wastewater Collection System near North Amy Lane but did not affect South Nolan Creek.

One notable news event in 2019 involved something that didn't happen. That was the hoped-for passage of a bill in the Texas Legislature that would have qualified Harker Heights for state reimbursement for the disabled veterans property tax exemption. Currently, only cities whose boundaries are contiguous with a military installation are eligible for state compensation for exempted property tax revenue.

Legislation sponsored by District 54 state Rep. Brad Buckley, R-Salado, which would have extended the compensation to cities with extraterritorial jurisdiction — the unincorporated area outside city limits where a municipality can exercise some oversight — within two miles of a boundary line of a military installation to be eligible to seek financial relief related to the exemption. The measure passed the House but stalled in the Senate, so cities such as Harker Heights and Nolanville will continue to receive no compensation. Harker Heights lost about \$1.5 million to the exemption in 2019 — a 40 percent increase from 2017.

In other comings and goings, Jennifer McCann was elected to the Harker

Heights City Council in May, taking the Place 1 seat formerly held by Hal Schiffman who was term-limited.

Parks and Recreation Director Jerry Bark was named the city's first public information officer. Bark also serves as the city's liaison in Austin. Jeff Achee succeeded Bark at the helm of Parks and Recreation. Harker Heights was named Host City of Texas Arbor Day 2020.

Bark also noted the following achievements:

FM 3481 waterline extension project:

The city extended an 8-inch waterline along the north side of FM 3481. The project was from Del Rey Drive to the boundary of the new southern city limits and fire hydrants were installed as well.

Warrior's Path Wastewater Interceptor line project: The city completed the extension of a trunk sewer line down Warrior's Path to Pueblo Trace.

Sidewalk project: The city completed a major sidewalk connection along Verna Lee Boulevard from Harker Heights High School to Windy Hill Drive.

City of Year Award: The Bell County Society of 40 Men and 8 Horses (40/8) Local 1031 presented the "City of Year" award to the City of Harker Heights. Mayor, Spencer H. Smith, attended the National Convention in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina to receive the National Award.

Infrastructure projects to help city keep pace with growth

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

Harker Heights plans some street maintenance projects in 2020 including: Mossy Oaks Circle Cul-de-Sac, reconstruction of Rattlesnake Road, improvements to the surface of Chaparral Road, and the development/extension of Tejas Trail.

UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Beeline Drive Waterline: Replace sections of small diameter water line less than 6 inches in diameter along Beeline Road to have a continuous looped 6-inch water line. Relocate the new water line behind the curb, to be completed in 2020.

Sewer Rehabilitation: Repair and replace defective sanitary sewer lines and manholes as part of an annual program to maintain the sanitary sewer systems within the city. The city completed its 10-year Sanitary Sewer Overflow Initiative and submitted the final report to Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS

Drainage Master Plan #1: This project was identified in the Federal Emergency Management Agency Phase 2 study. It will reduce the storm water flooding in the north part of the city. The project includes constructing a larger regional storm water detention facility at the Goode-Connell Park.

Drainage Master Plan #2: This project was identified in the FEMA Phase 2 study. It will reduce the storm water flooding in the north part of the city.

This project will widen the drainage channel from Indian Oaks Drive to Clore Road. Culvert and concrete channel improvements at Clore Road, Beeline Road and Robin Lane will also be constructed along with storm drainage improvements at Cherokee Drive, Elbert Lane and Cardinal Lane.

Roy Reynolds Bridge Abutment Stabilization Project: Nolan Creek has undermined the abutment on the downstream section of the Roy Reynolds Bridge. The city did repair the abutment on the upstream section of the bridge with a grant from the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Jorgette Drive Bank Stabilization: Reinforce the earthen drainage channel embankment with rock gabions or concrete rock rip-rap to prevent storm water erosion into the residential lots.

Pinewood Erosion Project (Retaining Wall): The project will construct a 200-linear-foot concrete retaining wall 10 feet in height with a privacy fence.

BUILDING PROJECTS

Fire Station #2 Renovation: The station was built in 2000 and was initially designed for a small number of personnel. As the city has grown, so has the need

for more room at this facility.

The renovation will add 2,200 square feet to the south end of the building to be used as the new living quarters and renovating the existing 2,500 square feet of living area into a weight room, storage, tool room, and laundry room. The renovation also includes providing a new exterior to the front of the building, the addition of a generator and new furnishings.

Remodel City Council Chambers: The remodel will include new ballistic panels on the front of the dais, replacement of the laminate on top and back of the dais counter, a new emergency exit door, and an accessible ramp leading to the existing sidewalk.

New Roof for the Wellness Center at Central Fire Station: This project provided a new thermoplastic polyolefin roof over the existing metal panel roof. This will match the material that is over the new administrative section and living section of Central Station.

Central Fire Station pavement: Demolish and reconstruct the reinforced pavement area of Central Station. The majority of the work will take place in an area of the current underground tanks.

Sidewalk from Prospector Trail to Vineyard Trail: Construct a 6-foot-wide sidewalk along FM 3481 from Prospector Trail to Vineyard Trail.

More people, businesses moving to Harker Heights

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

The latest estimated population for the city of Harker Heights is 30,532, and the city continues to grow at a modest rate.

This is calculated by the active residential water accounts and then multiplied by 2.96. The 2.96 figure is the latest U.S. Census Bureau's estimate for the occupancy rate in Harker Heights.

The city issued 160 residential permits in 2019, which is a slight decrease from 2018, when 174 were issued.

Since 1960, when voters approved the incorporation and the town of Harker Heights, the leadership of the city has taken the necessary steps to ensure that future growth was able to take place.

The population and dynamics of Harker Heights are shaped by various factors from Stillhouse Hollow Lake to the military installation of Fort Hood.

Of the 160 residential permits in 2019, 142 were for single-family homes.

The subdivisions that continue to experience the majority of residential development include: Evergreen Estates, Stonewall Ridge, The Ridge, and Cedarbrook Ridge.

Two-family dwellings, or duplexes, have become a practical option for many residents who may be living in the area for a short time or may not be ready to purchase a home. Of those 18 permits issued, the development took place in Comanche Land, Wildewood and the north side of the city. Growth is expected to remain steady during the upcoming year.

Harker Heights chamber plans innovation challenge

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

What are the major achievements of the chamber in the past year?

This year's Vision XXI Leadership Class graduates recently completed a service project that raised more than \$25,000 in cash and in-kind donations. The Memorial Project should be complete by late spring /early summer.

Harker Heights continues its growth with a strong business climate. The chamber, our members and leaders lead the way in promoting positive business relations. Identifying potential obstacles for growth and working together to solve those with creative, innovative ideas that work has been a key to success. The chamber has seen business expansions and transfers to new ownership showing strong growth in the community. Harker Heights continues to see population growth with new residential development, increase in jobs and median household income increases. We ended 2019 with an increase in hotel motel tax and retail sales tax revenue increased 8% over last year. The chamber will continue to focus on business development, retention, and business expansions.

"We are looking forward to another strong year in 2020," said Gina Pence, chamber president and CEO.

The chamber's main goals for the new year are enhancing membership participation, promoting economic and sustainable business growth, strengthening regional partnerships, developing and utilizing existing partnerships, tourism development and enhancing the visitor's center.

For future chamber events and programs, Pence encourages residents to check out www.hhchamber.com or follow the chamber on FaceBook.

"I want to encourage people to get involved with their chamber and meet the talented and interesting individuals in our community," Pence said. "All programs are designed to advance the interests of the area, its businesses, residents and visitors."

What new programs and initiatives has the chamber added in the past year?

We strongly believe that businesses



More than 130 runners and walkers take off at the beginning of the Superhero 5K "Mug Run" at Community Park in Harker Heights, which was sponsored by the Harker Heights Chamber of Commerce.

must have a presence online to compete in today's business world. The chamber has offered a free year of the enhanced membership to our members allowing them to take full advantage of additional online tools for more web and social media exposure.

What awards and recognitions did the chamber present at its membership banquet?

Hometown Hero Award presented to Ken Cates Director of Fort Hood Habitat for Humanity, Ambassador of the Year presented to Chentell Merriman, Outstanding Community Partner presented to American Veterans Mission (AVM), Outstanding Tourism Partner presented to Texas Boat World, Small Business of the Year presented to Pop! CornUtopia, Large Business of the Year presented to Smile Doctors Braces, and Kern-Cox Award presented to Dr. James Anderson. The city of Harker Heights presented: Police Officer of the year presented to Melissa Wolfe & Firefighter/Paramedic of the Year presented to Kellie Mozek and Citizen of the Year presented to Cyd West.

How many members does the chamber have? 800 members

What programs has the chamber implemented to grow membership?

E-Business Membership (for online

businesses only) and the E-Marketspace is an online market to showcase services and sell their products.

What major initiatives and programs are planned in the coming year?

We will be offering more vendor opportunities, business workshops and an innovation challenge for entrepreneurs. The challenge is a test of entrepreneurial creativity and a fun way to get our local students engaged. We will also launch Operation Vetpreneur that will support veteran startup and veteran-owned businesses that want to grow. The innovation challenge event will offer coaching, certification support and think tanks. The winning entrepreneur will get grant funding.

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This artist's rendering shows the design of Lake Belton High School, which will open in the fall.

Belton and its school district brace for growth in 2020

BY EMILY HILLEY-SIERZCHULA
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

If it seems like there are more folks on the roadways in Belton, it's because there are: the city's population has risen nearly 25 percent since 2010.

Currently the population of the county seat stands at 22,078, according to Paul Romer, the city's public information officer.

Several roadways are slated for improvements this year, including better parking, antique lighting and sidewalk improvements on East Street.

"The city council also is studying the Loop 121 and Shanklin (Road) area to determine the infrastructure needed to address the anticipated future growth in the area," Romer said. "Belton ISD is planning to build a school in the area and the roads, sewer and water capabilities need to be considered."

Next year, a Texas Department of Transportation project will expand Loop 121, which has become a well-traveled

thoroughfare. For the hikers and bikers, the Nolan Creek Trail is underway, Romer said.

Overseeing all this growth is the city council and mayor, but there might be some changes in May. Mayor Marion Grayson will not run again. Councilman Guy O'Banion is seeking re-election and current Mayor Pro Tem Wayne Carpenter has filed to run for mayor. Daniel Bucher, a member of the Parks and Recreation Board, is running for city council.

BELTON ISD

Belton's school district is led by a new superintendent, Dr. Matt Smith, who was hired on after most recently serving as Leander ISD's chief of staff.

"Smith has more than two decades of experience in public education serving as a classroom teacher, at-risk program coordinator, athletic director, campus administrator and district administrator," said Elizabeth Cox, executive director of communications

for Belton ISD.

The district also will be celebrating the opening of Lake Belton High School this fall.

Enrollment for the 2019-2020 school year is over 12,200 students. In their fall 2019 report, the district's demographers projected that Belton ISD will enroll more than 12,500 students by 2020 as the district continues to add more than 300 students each year.

Of course, all those new students need the best teachers, which is why the district announced financial incentives to keep its certified classroom teachers and to hire new ones.

The district also is high-achieving: The College Board recently included Belton ISD on its AP Honor Roll. It was the only Bell County district included, and one of 18 in the state.

"This honor reflects the hard work and dedication of our teachers to motivate and prepare our students for high academic achievement in high school and beyond," Cox said.

New business coming to Nolanville in the year ahead

BY HUNTER KING
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Heading into 2020, construction continues on Interstate 14 through Nolanville. The speed limit change that was approved by the Nolanville City Council nearly three months ago, reducing the speed limit from 75 to 65 in the work zone, is finally in effect.

The expansion of Interstate 14 began in September. The segment under construction continues to the FM 2410 exit in Belton. The project will make I-14 three lanes in both directions along that segment, similar to how it is in Killeen and Harker Heights. The 7-mile expansion costing \$45 million is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2021.

Volunteers in Nolanville gathered in November to construct a new shed and garden boxes for the Boys & Girls Club garden club. The improvements allow the kids to plant fruits and vegetables in the garden boxes and a place to store tools in the new shed. These projects were completed on Make a Difference Day.

The CEFCO on Main Street in Nolanville is being expanded and the new building is expected to open this summer, according to Kessler Pamplin, the brand manager for CEFCO.

The location will be 6,000 square feet and feature 16 fueling lanes, a full



Construction is underway for Cen-Tex RV and Boat Storage near Paddy Hamilton Road in Nolanville.

selection of grab-and-go foods and the company's Fresh Yo Frozen Yogurt concept.

"We look forward to supporting our community with additional job opportunities and providing great service for all who shop with CEFCO," Pamplin said in an email.

In other business news, Hidden Falls Nursery on Stan Schlueter Loop in Killeen and Grizzly's Landscaping on Farm to Market 2410 in Harker Heights are combining into one business and moving to Nolanville at 1101 E. Highway 190.

Ben Gillilan, the owner of the two businesses, said he is hoping the nursery will grow in the new location, which includes a new building, a spring-

fed fish pond, a rusty car waterfall and trails leading down to Nolan Creek. The area will eventually have a children's play area, according to Gillilan.

A new Cen-Tex RV and Boat Storage is also under construction on Paddy Hamilton Road in Nolanville. The business is scheduled to open this month, according to Cliff Brown, the owner of Texas Boat World in Harker Heights.

Monarch City Park will be a focus for Nolanville, according to the city.

Basketball courts were installed in 2019 and a park trail loop, community fields for soccer and baseball and an obstacle course trail will be built at the park in 2020, according to a news release from the city.

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Florence, Florence ISD experience steady growth in 2019

BY EMILY HILLEY-SIERZCHULA
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

The small town of Florence, in northwestern Williamson County, south of Killeen, continues to experience steady growth.

Florence's population currently stands at 1,175, but city officials anticipate that number will grow.

"We expect that number to reflect a substantial increase after the 2020 census is completed," said Peggy Morse, Florence Chamber of Commerce president. "The city is experiencing a continued resurgence in new businesses and families moving to our area."

The city is working to use a grant to upgrade undersized water lines and tie them together, as well as ongoing street repair.

"Also, the city completed construction on a new community swimming pool, which will open in June," Morse said.

Florence will be having a mayoral and council election in May.

Terms expire in 2020 for Mary

Condon, the city's mayor since 1995, as well as for Mayor Pro Tem Debra Bartos Cahill, who has been on the council since 2006.

Aldерwoman Candy Kyle also is up for re-election. Elected in 2018, she is the relative newcomer to the council. All will be seeking re-election.

For more information on local businesses and events in Florence, visit florencechamberofcommerce.org, or florencetex.com.

FLORENCE ISD

Florence ISD leaders are looking forward to 2020 and beyond.

"We continue to gain positive momentum in so many areas," said Superintendent Paul Michalewicz.

The district is continuing to provide After School Centers for Education (ACE) services and a free breakfast and lunch program for all students.

The district also now is a partner with the Gault Archaeological Site, one of the oldest prehistoric sites in the county and not far from Florence.

The district has an enrollment of 1,096 students at its three campuses.

"We're seeing growth at a steady rate in our district and our studies indicate that our enrollment will continue to climb," Michalewicz said. "We anticipate a much more rapid growth to begin in the next five to ten years."

The district also is getting started on several projects after voters approved a \$7.5 million bond.

"The work will include additions and renovations to address safety and security, mechanical and electrical upgrades in the form of roofing and HVAC replacement, renovations to science labs on all three campuses, additional flexible learning spaces for Career and Technology Education, and technology upgrades," Michalewicz said.

He's proud of the district's teachers, students and staff members.

"Students are provided a quality education by teachers and staff who care about and grow the whole child," he said. "It's a caring culture of teamwork and excellence."

Improvements continue for Salado's downtown, schools

BY JACOB BROOKS
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Bell County's southern village known for attracting tourists is still on the rebound after an extensive Interstate 35 widening project, but the future looks bright, said Salado City Manager Don Ferguson.

Downtown Salado businesses took a hit during years of interstate construction that made for white-knuckle driving through the village. That construction, which widened the busy I-35 from four to six lanes, ended in Salado in late 2016.

Officials previously said 82 of the Salado's 127 businesses shut down during the four years that it took to improve I-35, according to FME News Service reports.

Ferguson called the I-35 construction a "gut check."

But "our businesses have survived," Ferguson said in February. "We're seeing an increase of visitors."

Village officials hope to build on that increase with a \$5.2 million Main Street improvement project, which began last year. It includes new and better sidewalks, pavement upgrades, street lights, parking and benches.

"When all is said and done, we're going to have a walkable, enjoyable downtown," said Ferguson, adding

construction should be complete by early summer.

For Salado's 2,400 residents, a long-awaited \$8.2 million wastewater project is up and running as of last year, and Ferguson said officials have seen a steady increase in residential construction.

SALADO ISD

Salado Independent School District Superintendent Michael Novotny said the school system has also seen a steady rise.

"Our district's enrollment this year is 2,074 students. This compares to 1,348 from seven years ago. This is a 54% increase over the last seven years, which is the highest percentage increase of all 76 school districts in the Region 12 (Waco) area," he said in an email.

After a \$49.4 million Salado ISD bond was passed in 2018, the district completed improvements to the elementary school and football stadium last August.

A new baseball and softball stadium will be completed in February, and a new middle school will be completed in August.

"We are also building new tennis courts, which will be completed in February," Novotny said.

COPPERAS COVE

Copperas Cove population continues steady growth

BY DAVID PERDUE
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

With an estimated population of 35,307 residents in 2020, Copperas Cove continues to experience growth in housing and retail business.

Homes continue to be built, the Five Hills Retail Center is filling up on the City's east side, and many projects are underway to boost the City's overall quality of life.

The Business U.S. 190 corridor, currently seven lanes of traffic — three in each direction with a center turn lane — is in the final stages of redesign and future construction will include building raised center median, sidewalk and bike path.

The Parks and Recreation Department continues to work through the Park Improvements Project, a 5-year plan, which includes upgrades to parking lots, sidewalks and walking trails, lighting, playground equipment and much more.

"The Parks and Recreation staff is dedicated to the overall improvement of our parks system", stated Jeff Stoddard, Director of Parks and Recreation. He added that "our youth sports leagues are 'kids first' programs centered on fun and fundamentals" and "our partnerships with community organizations are a very important part of our success."

Among other improvement projects on the drawing board for Copperas Cove are the future renovation and expansion of Fire Station No. 3, and construction of a new Fire Station No. 4, which will increase the ability of the Copperas Cove Fire Department to respond to emergency calls throughout the City.

The Copperas Cove Animal Shelter, which is a sub-department of the Police Department, is also working through



Copperas Cove Parks and Recreation employee Kaylee Steele helps a family vote for the People's Choice food truck during the 3rd annual Copperas Cove Food Truck Festival in City Park.

a planning process for expansion, renovation and possible relocation, to better house the many dogs and cats which are cared for until adoption.

Keep Copperas Cove Beautiful continues to promote environmental issues to improve the city's overall appearance, sustainability and quality of life.

The city selected Ryan Haverlah as the new city manager in July of 2019, and he has been diligently working with staff and elected officials to keep all plans on track and moving forward.

The City Council has several new faces with new ideas for how the "City Built for Family Living" can press forward and progress into the next decade. City staffers encourage everyone in Central Texas to take a trip to Copperas Cove and enjoy the scenic Five Hills.

Copperas Cove has a wide variety of events and activities on tap each year, from the Five Hills Art Guild annual Art Festival at Ogletree Gap in April, to the annual Rabbit Fest at City Park in May. The Rabbit Fest brings an estimated 40,000 people to Copperas Cove and features a parade, carnival, vendors, car show and much more.

Copperas Cove Parks and Recreation also offers several special events throughout the year, including the 5K Run to the Polar Bear Plunge, Fishing in the Park, Easter Egg Round Up, Food Truck Festival, Fall-O-Ween Festival and a Farmer's Market which is operational from May to October.

Golfers can play a round on the Hills of Cove Golf Course, which is currently undergoing improvements of the cart path to provide easier access to the 18-hole course.

Cove gets new leadership, ends contract with Fathom

BY DAVID PERDUE
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

COPPERAS COVE — Change in Copperas Cove sometimes seems to come slowly, but 2019 brought a number of new faces into leadership of both elected bodies and business organizations.

The city elected a new mayor in April after the December death of Mayor Frank Seffrood from cancer.

The special election pitted former Mayor Bradi Diaz against former City Councilman Joey Acfalle and newcomers Ron Nelson and Brandi Weiland. Diaz won the April 27 election, gaining 62% of the votes cast. Diaz was sworn in as mayor on May 21.

Diaz's election marked the third shift in leadership for a major organization in Cove during the first half of the year.

Alicia Menard was selected to become the president of the Copperas Cove Chamber of Commerce in February. Jonas Titas became executive director of the Copperas Cove Economic Development Corporation at the beginning of April.

Titas began his tenure looking to revamp the EDC from the ground up. At a June meeting between the EDC board and the Copperas Cove City Council, Titas began seeking input for a new mission statement for the EDC.

The final version now used by the EDC is "To proactively support the creation of jobs and investment in Copperas Cove by recruiting new businesses, assisting existing businesses and planning for opportunities."

On June 25, the City Council announced that Ryan Haverlah would become city manager. Haverlah had been interim city manager for nearly a year and half while the city searched for a permanent replacement for former City Manager Andrea Gardner. The City Council approved Haverlah's contract in late July, agreeing to pay him \$155,000 a year plus benefits.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS/RENOVATIONS

In July, TxDOT began a major repaving project through the heart of downtown Copperas Cove. The project



Copperas Cove Economic Development Corporation Director Jonas Titas talks to council members and the EDC board at a joint workshop in the Copperas Cove City Council meeting room on June 25.

sealed and put down new asphalt on FM 1113 from Grimes Crossing Road to First Street.

The project included the portion of First Street between FM 1113 (West Avenue B) and FM 116 (East Avenue D). The project continued down FM 116 to U.S. Business 190.

The approximately four-miles of resurfacing was completed at a cost of \$1.4 million.

Several city businesses underwent renovations during the year, including the McDonald's and Sonic restaurants on U.S. Business 190. The EDC also contracted for and completed the demolition of a building at 201 S. Second St. A concrete pad remains on the site and is available for future use by a new business.

CITY COUNCIL CHANGES

Ten candidates ran for four seats available on the City Council in November's election. Place 3 City Councilman Dan Yancey and Place 4 City Councilman Jay Manning won reelection to the council, while first-time candidates Dianne Campbell and Jack Smith were elected to the Place 5 and

Place 7 council seats, respectively.

On Nov. 9, Copperas Cove officials were notified by Fathom that the third-party water biller would be going out of business. The news led to a series of regular and special meetings over the course of two weeks to determine how the city would handle water billing going forward.

The City Council decided that the best course would be to bring water billing back under city oversight, and told the city manager to pursue steps toward making that happen.

The city manager currently estimates that water customers will start receiving bills directly from the city in February or March.

MARKT MOVES

The annual Krist Kindl Markt also underwent a change in 2019. The Copperas Cove Chamber of Commerce decided to move the annual event from downtown to Copperas Cove City Park. The move seemed to be popular with vendors and those attending.

Menard said over 100 vendors participated, while total attendance was just under 16,000.

Cove EDC, chamber look forward after year full of changes

BY DAVID PERDUE
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

COPPERAS COVE — The Copperas Cove Chamber of Commerce and the Copperas Cove Economic Development Corporation both experienced a change in leadership last year.

The Chamber welcomed Alicia Menard as its president last February, while the EDC selected Jonas Titas as its executive director last April.

Both new leaders spent their initial weeks in charge analyzing operations, talking to board members and city officials, and charting a course forward for their organizations. And each now feels that the momentum they started generating last year will continue in 2020 and beyond.

For the Chamber of Commerce, the biggest change last year was the decision by the City of Copperas Cove to let the chamber become the city's Convention and Visitors Bureau again.

Menard said the redesignation by the city was a recognition of the work already being done by the staff that was in place at the chamber.

"It was very important that the designation came back to us," Menard said. "I definitely think that was my proudest moment of 2019. (The staff) deserved that title because they had already been working so hard for the community."

The decision in August led to a flurry of activity at the Chamber offices at 204 Robertson Ave. The lobby of the building now welcomes visitors with a variety of brochures and fliers carrying information about local and regional events.

Menard said that analyzing chamber events like Rabbit Fest and Krist Kindl Markt and making tweaks to each helped revitalize both events, bringing in more vendors and visitors.

For 2020, Menard wants to continue to add members and examine ways to make the chamber more responsive to member needs.

"We want to continue to show our community and the surrounding community ... that there is just a tremendous amount of opportunity for

networking and ... member-to-member business, so we definitely want to continue...to add benefits to our current membership as well as those coming on," Menard said.

The chamber is planning workshops and training for the local business community, starting with a leadership event at the Copperas Cove Civic Center in May. The chamber also plans to add a market space to its website so members can list things for sale. The website was revamped last June, and Menard is proud of the increase in information and interactivity that has happened since. From Oct. 1 to Dec. 31 of last year, the website had over 80,000 hits, including nearly 31,000 on its business and member directory.

"We want our site to be the go-to ... the one site where you can find everything going on in Copperas Cove," Menard said, "because not only is that going to benefit our members in the long run, but it truly allows us to achieve that tourism component as the visitor bureau and tourism marketer for Copperas Cove."

That means promoting city events such as the Easter Egg Roundup on April 4 and the Farmer's Market, which runs from May 7 to Oct. 24. The chamber is also promoting events by other organizations, like the Five Hills Art Guild Festival on April 25 and 26. The 41st annual Rabbit Fest will be held May 14 through 17. Information about those events and others can be seen on the chamber's website, www.copperascove.com

COPPERAS COVE EDC

While the chamber does more high-profile work to promote Copperas Cove, the Economic Development Corporation works more quietly to help attract new companies and create development and expansion opportunities for existing businesses.

Executive Director Jonas Titas said the EDC had to start from scratch last year, trying to get city leaders on the same page when it came to the message being presented to businesses interested in Copperas Cove.

Discussions between the EDC, the City Council, and city staffers resulted

in a new mission statement for the EDC and a positive attitude about economic development efforts being worked on by the organization.

Titas said the EDC continues to work hard to bring the Fort Hood multimodal rail project to fruition. The project has multiple parts, including adding access to Tank Destroyer Boulevard from Highway 9, completing a land swap with Fort Hood, and the eventual expansion of the rail head just off Highway 9 to make it easier to load and unload railcars for both commercial enterprise and military equipment transport.

"In order to undertake what needs to be done, we're looking at about a \$105 million project that would create a very unique port facility unlike any located between San Antonio and the DFW area," Titas said. "This is happening as you are seeing the total immersion of two-day shipping from Amazon Prime, Walmart...a lot more of the digital economy, a lot of e-commerce is becoming more and more prevalent."

The potential benefits for Copperas Cove, Fort Hood and the Killeen-Temple region are numerous, including the possible location of transportation and retail distribution operations to the area near the rail project.

But those benefits are still years away. Titas said the EDC is working just as hard to help existing businesses in Copperas Cove, as shown by the awarding of an economic development grant to Waffle Cone last year. The grant allowed the small business to buy a storage freezer that will help in its efforts to expand beyond its current location in Copperas Cove. The EDC hopes more businesses will explore that type of development incentive. In addition, Titas said the EDC hopes to begin offering business classes and training at its office in downtown Copperas Cove this year.

The EDC is also making its mark on the Business 190 median project set to begin later this year. Titas said the organization explored ways it could contribute to the project and decided to pick up the cost of burying utilities along the corridor where the project is taking place.



This wildflower mural is one of several works of art showcased on buildings in downtown Lampasas.

Lampasas seeks expansion of training and workforce

BY DAVID PERDUE
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Strengthening the local workforce has continued to be a priority for the city of Lampasas, with help from the school district, county and colleges.

The Lampasas Independent School District's Career and Technical Education program continues to expand each year. The district is proposing a new facility for agriculture and animal science, along with new programs including cosmetology, construction and welding. The program

currently offers over 700 various certifications.

The Lampasas County Higher Education Center also gives residents the opportunity to pursue professional certifications without leaving Lampasas.

The center offers a variety of career-training programs in allied health fields, which are approved and regulated by the Texas Workforce Commission, and in the fall of 2017 began offering the Information Technologies Technician course. This course was designed to certify students in various computer hardware setups, network, security and troubleshooting — enabling students to gain entry to job fields such as system or network administrators, help-desk technicians and Security Officer level 1.

In partnership with Central Texas College and Texas A&M University-Central Texas, the center continues to offer courses in several academic fields, which range from microbiology, physics and anatomy to fine art appreciation.

The city has been growing residentially and commercially, as well. It has already accomplished several projects in 2020. A new restroom facility was installed at Campbell Park and the Jack Calvert Building was dedicated in late January. The city entered the HGTV "Hometown Takeover" contest in February. If it wins, "Takeover" hosts Ben and Erin Napier would help revitalize the town and film it for future airing on HGTV.

One setback for the county was a delay in finishing the Lampasas County jail. The project was left 90% complete when the contractor defaulted.

A new general contractor will be sought to finish the nearly \$16 million project. The county expects a four- to six-month delay to finish construction.

The Lampasas County Chamber of Commerce continues to focus on fun events for the entire county. The Riata Roundup Rodeo will be May 28-30. The annual Spring Ho Festival will be July 6-12. The Lampasas County Wine Tour will be Sept. 26.

The Lampasas Economic Development Corporation continued improvements to technology infrastructure in 2019 working alongside Foresite Group Inc. The EDC continues to market the city business park to interested companies while helping existing businesses explore retention and expansion. The EDC also meets with local businesses to assess training needs and professional development.

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MILITARY

Deployments, leadership changes mark year at Fort Hood

BY DAVID A. BRYANT
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Deployments, redeployments, training and more filled calendar year 2019 for the troops stationed at “The Great Place,” along with many changes in unit leadership. Many of those changes will carry through this year, with funding secured in the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act to bring new construction to Fort Hood for the benefit of training and troop welfare.

Here is a look at some of the events that will shape Fort Hood into the near future.

COMMAND CHANGES

Several major commands changed hands during 2019, to include the highest command on post — III Corps.

On June 5, Lt. Gen. Paul E. Funk II, who served as the commanding general since March 2017, relinquished command to Lt. Gen. Robert “Pat” White. Funk was then given a fourth star to take command of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

Of the divisions on post, Maj. Gen. Jeff Broadwater took over command of the 1st Cavalry Division from Maj. Gen. Paul Calvert and Maj. Gen. Erik C. Peterson relinquished command of First Army Division West to Maj. Gen. Frank W. Tate.

Col. Jason Wesbrock assumed command of Fort Hood Garrison from Col. Hank Perry, and Col. Ronald R. Ragin took over Operational Test Command from Brig. Gen. William “Hank” Taylor.

Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center also received a new boss when Col. David R. Gibson passed the baton of command over to Col. Richard G. Malish.



Two brigades also saw new leadership come in. The 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team “Ironhorse,” 1st Cavalry Division, said farewell to Col. Wilson R. Rutherford IV and welcomed Col. Michael D. Schoenfeldt, and the 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade welcomed Col. Ethan L. Hall as they said goodbye to Col. Curtis W. King.

DEPLOYMENTS

Elements of the 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade from Fort Hood — two Patriot surface-to-air missile systems batteries — are a part of the additional 1,800 troops authorized by the Pentagon on Oct. 11 to increase the U.S. presence in the Saudi Arabia region to deter Iranian aggression.

Some of the major units from Fort Hood currently deployed are the III Corps Headquarters element, with about 250 soldiers deployed to Iraq for a year as the command element for Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve. The headquarters element took over the mission in September 2019 and will return later this year.

The 1st Cavalry Division’s 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team has 3,500 troops currently in Europe as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve and the division’s 3rd Armored Brigade

Combat Team has roughly 4,000 soldiers on a rotation to South Korea. Both are scheduled to return later this year.

The 3rd Security Force Assistance Brigade is in Afghanistan for a year with 800 soldiers on a train, advise and assist mission. The brigade deployed in October 2019 for the mission.

Additional troops from other units on Fort Hood are deployed in smaller numbers around the world, bringing the number of Fort Hood deployed troops to around 10,000.

The 3rd Cavalry Regiment completed a rotation to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, in November. The regiment is currently awaiting assignment from the Department of the Army for an expected deployment either this spring or early summer.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

With a new 171-camera surveillance system installed at the Robert Gray Army Airfield in December, 15 soldiers are going to be able to return to their units and resume their normal duties.

Cameras will now scan all areas of the airport, providing detailed views of occupants and license plates of vehicles entering the airport property, which will negate the need for troops to physically provide the capability.

The final version of the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act was signed into law in December, and will bring about \$67 million in projects for Fort Hood and \$400 million total in projects to the state of Texas. The Fort Hood projects include \$16.5 million for a new central energy plant, \$18.5 million for a new vehicle bridge and \$32 million for a barracks.

The National Mounted Warfare Museum is set to begin construction in May 2020. Read more about it on page 50.

The Great Place hosts several big events during 2019

BY DAVID A. BRYANT
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Calendar year 2019 was a busy one for the troopers of Fort Hood, with deployments, anniversaries and high-level VIP visits. It was also a sad year for many, with the war in Afghanistan reminding the post that it is still deadly and can still reach out and touch the Fort Hood community.

Here are some of the events which impacted “The Great Place” in 2019.

VP VISIT

Vice President Mike Pence landed at Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport Oct. 28 ahead of a visit to Fort Hood on Oct. 29, part of a planned visit to Texas.

After landing in Killeen around 8:30 p.m., the vice president took an unscheduled trip into Killeen to the site of the Nov. 5, 2009 Fort Hood Memorial, where Pence paid his respects to those who lost their lives in the terrorist attack that killed 12 soldiers and a civilian employee.

On Oct. 29, the vice president spoke to the troops after viewing a live-fire exercise from M1 Abrams tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles from the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. Following the exercise, Pence attended a closed Veterans Transition Roundtable to speak with veterans and active-duty troops about the challenges of transitioning into the workforce from the military.

10 YEARS AFTER TRAGEDY

Roughly 200 people gathered at the Nov. 5, 2009, Memorial on Nov. 5 to remember the 13 who were killed and 31 who were wounded 10 years ago by ex-Army Maj. Nidal Hasan. Friends and family of those killed were in attendance, as were survivors — including the Department of the Army policeman who ended Hasan’s shooting spree — U.S. congressmen and members of the committee who made the memorial possible.

DEPLOYMENTS

Roughly 10,000 troops from Fort Hood



Vice President Mike Pence visited Fort Hood in October and paid his respects to those killed in the Nov. 5, 2009, attack on the post.

are deployed around the world.

Two Patriot surface-to-air missile systems batteries the 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade are in the Saudi Arabia region to deter Iranian aggression.

The III Corps Headquarters element has about 250 soldiers deployed to Iraq as the command element for Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve. The 1st Cavalry Division’s 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team has 3,500 troops currently in Europe as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve and the division’s 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team has roughly 4,000 soldiers on a rotation to South Korea.

The 3rd Security Force Assistance Brigade is in Afghanistan with 800 soldiers on a train, advise and assist mission, and additional troops from other units on Fort Hood are deployed in smaller numbers around the world.

Fort Hood currently has a little more than 36,000 troops assigned to the post.

REMEMBERING THE FALLEN

Fort Hood units unfortunately had to say goodbye to 13 soldiers last year. Of those, three were killed in combat in Afghanistan, three died in training accidents and the rest died in vehicle

accidents or to unspecified reasons.

FAMILY HOUSING

Family housing safety at military installations run by civilian companies originally surfaced in February as a national issue by then-Secretary of the Army Mark Esper. He is now the Secretary of Defense. During subsequent town halls at Fort Hood, residents complained of problems involving mold, long response times for maintenance and other issues.

Esper ordered a full investigation into civilian owned and operated post housing at all Army installations on Feb. 15 and Fort Hood has been working and hosting town halls since then.

Since then, III Corps leaders conducted community town halls in February, June, August and November to hear from its residents. Brigade commanders also have conducted monthly town halls in each of Fort Hood’s 12 family housing areas and have increased involvement by the chain of command, including visits to all family housing homes.

The post has constructed 20 “Problem Resolution” signs in housing areas to better inform residents on how to get help with housing issues and established a 24/7 Housing hotline: 254-206-1157.

Fort Hood Directorate of Public Works has also hired seven additional staff to perform quality assurance inspections of all change of occupant maintenance, all emergency service orders and a random sample of all priority urgent and routine service orders.










The next Fort Hood town hall is set for March 19 at Howze Theater.

HUG LADY

On July 1, III Corps and Fort Hood leadership formally dedicated a room at the Staff Sgt. George Larkin Terminal at Robert Gray Army Airfield after Elizabeth Laird.

Laird, affectionately known as the “Hug Lady,” gave out an estimated 500,000 hugs to soldiers departing to and returning from combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan between 2003 and the time of her death in 2015.



UNIT	STATIONED	DEPLOYED	UNIT	STATIONED	DEPLOYED
 III Corps Headquarters	Iraq/Kuwait	232	 36th Engineer Brigade	Iraq/Kuwait	5
 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team	Germany/Europe	3,500	 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade	Kuwait	423
 3rd Security Force Assistance Brigade	Afghanistan	791	 89th Military Police Brigade	Texas/Mexico Border	266
 11th Signal Brigade	Iraq/Kuwait	160	 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team 1st Cavalry Division (currently redeploying)	South Korea	3,600
			 Military Assigned	Fort Hood	37,004

Including about 8,977 deployed.

Source: Fort Hood Population Card and Fact Sheet

Graphic Reporting: David A. Bryant

III Corps protecting coalition troops during yearlong Iraq deployment

BY DAVID A. BRYANT
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Fort Hood’s leading headquarters unit — III Corps — deployed in September 2019 for a year in the Middle East.

Lt. Gen. Robert “Pat” White, III Corps and Fort Hood commander, is leading Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve in the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria during the deployment, along with roughly 250 soldiers from the headquarters element.

“Our mission is to go over, integrate into a larger staff ... and help both the Iraqis and those partner forces in Syria to ensure that insurgency (from ISIS) stays at a level that they can deal with, without having us to have to commit anymore resources,” White said prior to the deployment.

In early January 2020, the coalition issued a statement on the ongoing mission to defeat the Islamic State.

“Our first priority is protecting all coalition personnel committed to the defeat of Daesh,” according to the statement, using another word for the Islamic State group, or ISIS. “Repeated rocket attacks over the last two months by elements of Kata’ib Hezbollah have caused the death of Iraqi Security Forces personnel and a U.S. civilian. As a result we are now fully committed to protecting the Iraqi bases that host coalition troops. This has limited our capacity to conduct training with partners and to support their operations against Daesh and we have therefore paused these activities, subject to continuous review. We remain resolute as partners of the government of Iraq and the Iraqi people that have welcomed

us into their country to help defeat ISIS.”

The statement came a few days after President Donald Trump ordered an airstrike to kill Iranian Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani in retaliation for an attack on the U.S. embassy in Baghdad. Relations with Iraq were fractured after the drone strike on Jan. 3 that killed Soleimani, according to The Associated Press. Parliament later voted to expel U.S. forces and Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi asked Washington to work out a road map for a troop withdrawal. The U.S. flatly rejected the request.

Maj. Gen. Kenneth L. Kamper is serving as the deputy commander for operations and British Maj. Gen. Jez Strickland is the deputy commander for support. The senior enlisted advisor is Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel T. Hendrex.

III Corps oversees 23 brigades in four divisions across four installations, as well as several separate functional brigades that provide sustainment, medical, engineering, fires, civil affairs, military law enforcement and intelligence support.

The command scope of III Corps includes the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, the 1st Armored Division at Fort Bliss, the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas, and the 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson, Colorado. In total, III Corps is comprised of about 120,000 soldiers. Currently, eight of the 10 armored brigade combat teams in the Army are in III Corps, comprised of 88,360 soldiers. The corps has three of the Army’s eight Stryker brigade combat teams and four combat aviation brigades. Units within the corps do six combat training center rotations a year, and the division and corps headquarters will participate in three warfighter exercises.

Construction to begin this year on Mounted Warfare Museum

BY DAVID A. BRYANT
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

The National Mounted Warfare Foundation has raised its goal of \$10.9 million needed to build Phase I of a new, state-of-the-art museum near Fort Hood's main gate.

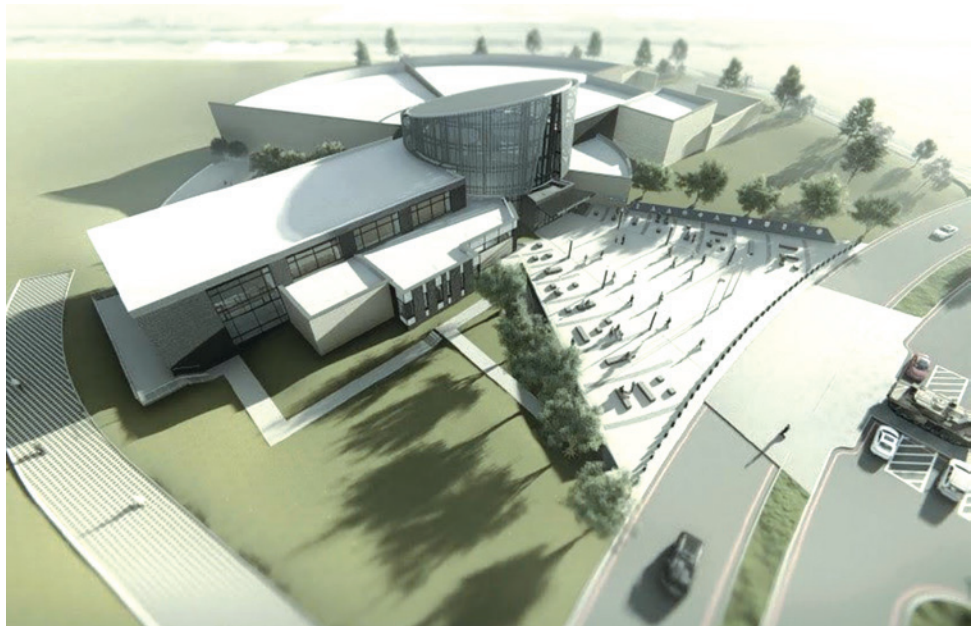
"Projected to open in 2022, although we could open earlier, Phase I of the Museum will be a 28,700 square foot structure including 13,000 square feet of interactive and immersive permanent exhibit galleries and over 7,000 square feet of temporary exhibit space," Bob Crouch, vice president of the foundation, said Monday. "We expect to construct Phases II through VII sequentially once Phase I is underway."

According to Crouch, Phase II will expand the permanent exhibit gallery space by 11,000 square feet. Phase III will be the construction of two 1,500 square foot multi-purpose conference/classrooms, Phase IV will be the construction of the museum gift shop and foundation staff offices, Phase V will be the construction of staff offices for the museum curators, Phase VI will be an upgraded outdoor amphitheater and Phase VII will be an additional pair of multi-functional conference/classrooms.

"While we have funded Phase I, we still have several phases we need to raise money for, so we would definitely appreciate continued donations," Crouch said.

While the city of Killeen provided about \$1.3 million in seed money to get the foundation underway, most of the funding for the museum was raised from private donations, including a \$5 million donation came from an anonymous donor in April 2014.

The Army is expected to allow the foundation to build the museum building on approximately 17 acres of land immediately adjacent to the Fort Hood visitors' center and overlooking Interstate 14, outside of Fort Hood's fenced security area. That means visitors will not have to go through a Fort Hood gate to access the museum — a point, officials say, that could lead to greater attendance.



This artist's rendering shows the National Mounted Warfare Museum planned at Fort Hood.

Additionally, the U.S. Army Center of Military History will fund the design, fabrication and installation of the museum's exhibits. Upon completion of Phase I, the Army will assume ownership and management of the museum, while the foundation continues to plan and fundraise for future expansion. Fort Hood's two existing museums — the 1st Cavalry Division Museum and the 3rd Cavalry Regiment Museum — will move into the new building, officials said.

Retired Lt. Gen. Paul Funk, the president and CEO of the National Mounted Warfare Foundation, said in late December the foundation has reached the financial threshold required to request permission of the Secretary of the Army to build the museum.

The approval paperwork is currently making its way through the Army chain of command, Crouch said on Monday.

In addition to memorializing the many units and soldiers who at one time called Fort Hood home, the museum also will be a go-to destination for visitors and could attract thousands of others annually to the Killeen-Fort Hood area, foundation officials said.

Crouch said attendance at the museum is projected to be 265,000 visitors in the first year, including 195,000 visitors from outside the area.

The museum expects to bring in a minimum of \$5 million annually to the local economy, said Funk.

According to Crouch, the top expenses in the \$26 million capital campaign goal include \$10.9 million for Phase I of the building, \$10.4 million for exhibits and an additional \$5 million to complete Phases II through VII.

Officials have downsized the museum plan over the years. When it was announced in 2011, the foundation was envisioning a \$130 million military museum between 85,000 and 100,000 square feet.

The foundation hopes to be able to break ground on the museum by May 2020, Crouch said. "Anecdotally, we know that visible, physical progress on a project like this builds excitement in the community and encourages people to support and contribute to the effort."

Crouch said the foundation's annual operating budget is \$307,450. Most of that stems from \$227,200 in the annual salaries of the three full-time foundation employees and three development consultants. Rent, utilities and other bills make up the remainder of the budget, according to Crouch.

To donate or find out more information about the National Mounted Warrior Museum, go to nmwfoundation.org.

MEDICAL

AdventHealth celebrates achievements, plans initiatives

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

AdventHealth Central Texas marked the past year with a name change, expanded its pharmacies and medical services, and pioneered a new surgical procedure — among other achievements.

The following responses were provided by Erin Riley, Public Relations and Marketing manager for AdventHealth Central Texas, on behalf of Kevin Roberts, president and CEO of AdventHealth Central Texas in Killeen and AdventHealth Rollins Brook in Lampasas.

What are the major achievements of your hospital in the past year?

“2019 marked a year of tremendous change and growth for AdventHealth Central Texas,” CEO Kevin Roberts said.

- “We acquired the Family Medicine Clinics in Copperas Cove and Lampasas and began offering cardiac services in Lampasas.

- “We also were the first hospital in Central Texas to perform a thrombectomy using the Inari FlowTrierer, the first FDA-approved tool that removes large blood clots in the lungs through a catheter.

- “We developed stronger interdependency with our joint venture partner, Baylor Scott & White, by bringing more specialist physicians into Killeen.”

FOUNDATION: “The 25th Annual Gold Star Gala was a huge success,” Roberts said. “In addition to the funds that were raised for a good cause, we recognized three legacy doctors: Dr. Phillip Day, Dr. Pablo Leonardo and Dr. Stephen Vancura. The \$110,000 raised will become the second installment toward the Foundation’s 3-year commitment for the hospital’s Wellness Center project.”

What accreditations and certifications

did you earn?

AdventHealth Central Texas received the following:

- 4-star hospital rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

- American Stroke Association Get With The Guidelines® Target: Stroke Honor Roll Gold Quality Achievement Award

- Mission: Lifeline® NSTEMI Bronze Quality Achievement Award

- Mission: Lifeline® Gold Plus Receiving Quality Achievement Award

- Accreditation as a Joint Commission Chest Pain Center

AdventHealth Rollins Brook Received the following:

- Top Rural Hospital by Leapfrog for the fourth time.

- Women’s Choice Award-America’s 100 Best Hospitals for Patient Experience.

How many patient visits did you record last year? How many babies were delivered? How many ER visits?

“AdventHealth Central Texas saw 107,601 total patients. We delivered 1,347 babies. And we had more than 59,000 ER visits.”

Were any expansion projects undertaken or completed? Are any building projects underway?

“At the end of 2019, the pharmacies at AdventHealth Central Texas and AdventHealth Rollins Brook underwent expansions to serve the needs of our communities better and 10 medical/surgical patient beds were refurbished to allow for expansion of inpatient capacity. The Foundation also assisted with the expansion of the rehabilitation facilities at AdventHealth Rollins Brook.”

What additions did you make to your staff? Did you add any specialties and/or treatment programs?

“In 2019, AdventHealth added 14 new primary care providers who will further extend our network of care in Lampasas

and Copperas Cove. Also, in partnership with Baylor Scott & White, we have expanded our offerings in imaging, pathology and interventional radiology.

“Finally, Umad Ahmad, MD, was named Chief Medical Officer for AdventHealth Central Texas and AdventHealth Rollins Brook.”

What major expenditures are planned in the coming year, if any?

“In the coming year, we will continue to reinvest in our service lines, such as orthopedics and heart and vascular services, to ensure we are providing state-of-the-art care for Central Texas.”

What new initiatives have been undertaken in the past year?

“In 2019, we enhanced our imaging services by adding 3T MRI capabilities and 3D Mammography. Both will ensure that our patients will receive diagnostic care that provides accurate results in a timely manner so that they can have the answers they need to receive the best care possible. We also expanded our cardiology and orthopedic services to AdventHealth Rollins Brook, providing much-needed care to the residents of Lampasas.”

What initiatives are planned in 2020?

“We will continue to expand our network of care through growth and our Baylor Scott & White partnership so that the residents of Central Texas can receive compassionate, connected care that is easy to navigate and provides results that help them feel whole,” Roberts said.

FOUNDATION: “In 2020, the Foundation hopes to continue to build upon its strong relationship with the community by telling the story of how their helps us be of service to our patients. The foundation is also hoping to expand its scholarship offerings to graduating high school students seeking a degree in a medical field.”

Baylor Scott & White facilities expand services in 2019

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

Scott & White Medical Center-Temple continued to grow in 2019, with new construction projects, medical advances and new initiatives. Following are questions sent to Tiya Searcy, marketing and public relations consultant for Baylor Scott & White Health:

What are the major achievements of your hospital in the past year?

Among awards and recognitions:

In 2019, U.S. News & World Report ranked Baylor Scott & White Medical Center – Temple among the top 10 hospitals in Texas:

- Nationally ranked in Ear, Nose and Throat care
- High performing in two specialties — Gastroenterology & GI Surgery, and Pulmonology

• High performing in four common procedures or conditions — heart failure, colon cancer surgery, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, and knee replacement

What accreditations and certifications did you earn?

Following are some accreditations and certifications Scott & White Medical Center – Temple has earned:

- American College of Cardiology and American Heart Association CathPercutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI) Registry Accreditation
- American College of Cardiology Accreditation for Cardiovascular Excellence (ACE) Accreditation
- American Heart Association (AHA) certified as a Lifeline STEMI Receiving Center
- Joint Commission Chest Pain - MI Registry Accreditation
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Certification and United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) approved center – Transplant
- Joint Commission Hospital Accreditation
- American College of Surgeons Trauma Designation
- National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) Certified Recruitment Center – Bone Marrow

Baylor Scott & White McLane



Children's Medical center has earned several accreditations and designations, including:

- Texas Department of State Health Services NICU Level 4 Designation
- Level 2 Pediatric Trauma Center

How many patient visits did you record last year? How many babies were delivered? How many ER visits?

At Baylor Scott & White Medical Center – Temple (including Bell, Coryell, Milam, and McLennan County):

- More than 2,600 babies delivered
- More than 76,000 patients visited the emergency department
- More than 1.5 million patients visited the outpatient clinics

At McLane Children's Medical Center:

- More than 28,000 patients visited the emergency department
- More than 4,000 patients were discharged from the hospital
- More than 254,000 patients visited outpatient clinics

Were any expansion projects undertaken or completed? Are any building projects underway?

• In 2019, a modern-surgical-sciences building, The Grobowsky Surgical Center, opened at Baylor Scott & White Medical Center – Temple, with a capacity to adapt to an ever-growing population and ensure the required space to continue innovating.

- A new state-of-the-art linear

accelerator replaced an older model at the Baylor Scott & White Cancer Center - Killeen

• Baylor Scott & White McLane Children's Medical Center completed phase one of the hospital expansion. The \$25M expansion includes the McLane Children's Fikes/CEFCO emergency department, outpatient Physical and Occupational Therapy clinic areas, Hospital imaging services, and Special Procedures Unit.

Did you add any specialties and/or treatment programs?

Baylor Scott & White Medical Center – Temple:

- A Comprehensive Hepatobiliary Program was added
- Cardiovascular Services has been expanded to Waco, Copperas Cove, and Lampasas
- Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) Therapy
- A Home Dialysis Program was added
- An Allergy Clinic has been added to Baylor Scott & White Clinic – Killeen.
- Bariatric Surgery post-surgical consults have been added to Baylor Scott & White Clinic- Killeen
- Twice-a-week Dietary Education Classes at Baylor Scott & White Convenient Care Clinic – Killeen have been increased.
- More primary care providers have been added to Killeen, Harker Heights,

The Grobowsky Surgical Center, opened at Baylor Scott & White Medical Center – Temple, with a capacity to expand as the region grows.



Killeen West, and Copperas Cove clinics

- Services and clinic space have been expanded at Baylor Scott & White Cancer Center – Killeen and a 3D Mammography Unit was added
- McLane Children’s Medical Center:
 - Hospital Tele-Psych Service was added
 - After-hours pediatric convenient care in Baylor Scott & White McLane Children’s Clinic – Killeen was expanded (Open Monday-Friday 5-9 p.m. in addition to Saturday-Sunday 8 a.m.-5 p.m. hours)
 - More primary care providers have been added to Killeen and Killeen-Hemingway clinics

What new initiatives have been undertaken in the past year?

Locally, several primary care clinics continue to serve the community, including Baylor Scott & White Clinic – Killeen, which has served over 38 years.

Growth and expansion of centralized telemedicine services for routine acute conditions, particularly around eVisits (asynchronous) and same day video visits (synchronous), are planned. Access to these services are now found in the MyChart App. Also, existing will grow their capability to reach their patients by way of scheduled video for follow-up care. Additionally, educational programs are expanding at the request of our patients.



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Seton Medical Center-Harker Heights adds programs

HERALD STAFF REPORTS

Seton Medical Center-Harker Heights, in its eighth year of operation, continued to grow in 2019 and looks to more improvements in the coming year.

The following questions were posed to Lucy Taylor, communications specialist:

What are the major achievements of your hospital in the past year?

- Seton Medical Center Harker Heights was named one of the nation's 100 Top Hospitals by IBM Watson Health.

This annual study spotlights the best-performing hospitals in the U.S. based on a balanced scorecard of publicly available clinical, operational and patient satisfaction metrics and data.

- Modern Healthcare has ranked Seton Medical Center Harker Heights as the nation's 64th Best Place to Work in Healthcare. Organizations are chosen based on interviews with leadership and surveys that assess current employees' satisfaction, work-life balance, communication, policies, practices, work environment and culture.

What accreditations and certifications did you earn?

- American College of Cardiology NCDR Chest Pain MI Registry Platinum Award: This award recognizes SMCHH's commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of care for heart attack patients and signifies that SMCHH has reached an aggressive goal of treating these patients to standard levels of care as outlined by the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association clinical guidelines and recommendations. Through full participation in the registry, hospitals engage in a robust quality improvement process, using data to drive improvements and positively impact patient outcomes for heart attack patients.

- ACC Accreditation Services Cardiac Cath Lab PCI Accreditation: The American College of Cardiology recognized SMCHH for its demonstrated expertise and commitment in treating patients who come to a cardiac cath lab for care, including diagnostic catheterizations and percutaneous



Seton's Cardiac Cath Lab received accreditation with PCI from the American College of Cardiology.

coronary intervention (PCI) procedures. Hospitals receiving Cardiac Cath Lab Accreditation with PCI from the ACC must take part in a multifaceted clinical process that involves: completing a gap analysis; examining variances of care; developing an action plan; a rigorous onsite review; and monitoring for sustained success. Improved methods and strategies of caring for patients include streamlining processes, implementing guidelines and standards, and adopting best practices in the care of cath lab patients. Facilities that achieve accreditation meet or exceed an array of stringent criteria and have organized a team of doctors, nurses, clinicians, and other administrative staff that earnestly support the efforts leading to improved patient outcomes.

How many patient visits did you record last year? How many babies were delivered? How many ER visits?

- Roughly 50,000 ER visits
- Delivered over 900 babies
- Admitted about 5,000 patients

Were any expansion projects undertaken or completed? Are any building projects underway?

In 2019, SMCHH opened the 2nd floor south wing to meet an increasing demand for capacity on the medical surgical units. SMCHH is also utilizing space planning to address patient care areas that are at or near capacity — including inpatient units, the emergency department and the medical

office building.

What additions did you make to your staff? Did you add any specialties and/or treatment programs?

Interventional Radiology is a medical sub-specialty that focuses on diagnosis, treatment, and clinical management of patients using minimally invasive procedures guided by medical imaging. The concept behind interventional radiology is to diagnose and treat patients using the least invasive techniques currently available in order to minimize risk to the patient and improve health outcomes. These procedures have less risk, less pain and less recovery time in comparison to open surgery.

What new initiatives have been undertaken in the past year?

Epic EMR Implementation: Launched new electronic medical record system. This system is used by over 250 health care organizations nationwide. Epic allows for one chart to follow patients through the multipole areas in which they receive care. By utilizing MyChart (a web portal patients can access on their computer or cellphone), patients have access to the same medical records their doctor sees. Records can be linked for multiple hospitals and facilities. In addition to accessing medical history, patients can view test results, communicate with their providers, request prescription renewals, and request appointments.

Greater Killeen Community Clinic gets new leadership

BY THADDEUS IMERMAN
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

The Greater Killeen Community Clinic, which opened in 1994 as the Killeen Free Clinic, recently began its 25th year in operation, and it did so with a new executive director.

Jody Nicholas took over Nov. 1, 2019, as the second executive director in the clinic's history after longtime director Marlene DiLillo announced her retirement.

Nicholas takes over a clinic with a long history of serving uninsured residents in the community. The clinic offers free medical services and medications to qualifying residents of Bell, Coryell and Lampasas counties.

To qualify for the free services, residents must have no health insurance, a low income and no access to Medicaid, Medicare, TRICARE, the County Indigent Program or VA services, according to the clinic's website. The clinic requests patients who utilize the services to make a

small contribution, but the clinic will never turn away anyone who meets the criteria. In 2019, Nicholas said the clinic served 8,015 patients.

Since taking over as the executive director, Nicholas said the job has been rewarding, both in terms of patient interaction and the services the clinic provides. The clinic provides acute care, chronic care and mental health services.

Nicholas said the highlight so far is that she enjoys what she is doing. "The people that come there seeking assistance are in pain — have issues — but yet, they're very, very grateful for what we do," she said.

Reflecting on her own experiences going to a doctor's office, Nicholas said the experience at the free clinic is quite different. "It's not what I would call a normal sick person coming into a clinic where they don't know you, they don't know who you are," she said. "They seem to get to know us, and it's like friends."

The patients are happy to see the staff and come back over and over.

Nicholas said between 11 and 16 nurses and doctors, depending on the workload, volunteer their time to provide services to patients. The volunteers are supplied by Baylor Scott & White in Temple, AdventHealth in Killeen and Seton Medical Center in Harker Heights. Along with the volunteers, the clinic employs 11 part-time and full-time staff members.

One of the duties Nicholas has as executive director is securing funding for the clinic, and she said it hasn't been easy. "Probably one of the challenges is continuing to ask for funding and assistance," she said.

Nicholas said she is talking to the same contacts DiLillo had made during her nearly 24-year career.

"It always grows and changes," Nicholas said.

The clinic is at 718 N. Second St., Suite A, in Killeen. Acute care patients are seen Mondays and Thursdays with check-in beginning at 3:30 p.m. Chronic care patients are seen on Tuesdays with check-in beginning at 9 a.m.

20 months after explosion, Coryell Health opens new hospital

BY THADDEUS IMERMAN
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

GATESVILLE — Nearly 20 months after a June 26, 2018, explosion that rocked the town of Gatesville, Coryell Health opened the doors to an expanded hospital facility.

The Skiles Group, based in Dallas, was hired to complete the project after the explosion. The new facility — which officials opened to the public on Feb. 10 — features a 25-bed building for inpatient services, two new operating rooms, a sleep center, a stress test center, and a cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation center.

At an open house in December for members of the community to preview the site, hospital CEO David Byrom said the new facility will offer better care to the community.

"It's a new environment with a great deal of technology in it," he said. "Our surgery suites are offering things that we can do on a local level now that folks used to have to travel."

The hospital purchased a Robotic Surgical Assistant, called ROSA. The ROSA is designed to assist surgeons with orthopedic surgeries, such as a total knee replacement.

Construction of the project initially began with a ground breaking on Nov. 9, 2016, according to Carly Latham, director of marketing. The hospital had a "re-ground breaking" on April 9, after a 10-month delay following the

deadly explosion. A pocket of natural gas caused the 2018 explosion. Michael Bruggman, 42, of Rogers, died in the blast. Filiberto Morales, 36, of Round Rock, and Wilber Dimas, 29, later succumbed to their injuries. Thirteen others were injured in the explosion.

"We have them on our mind every day," Byrom said of the ones who died.

The foyer of the new extension is bright and well-lit with large windows to provide natural light. The patient rooms have brand new beds with couches that can be transformed into beds for family members who need to stay the night with a patient. The hospital has new pre-op rooms that give patients more privacy.

In total, the facility has four operating rooms, six pre-op rooms and eight recovery rooms.

The expansion of the hospital cost around \$44 million and takes up around 117,000 square feet. Byrom said the project has added approximately 70 jobs, and the hospital now employs around 600 people.

A 16-bed inpatient rehabilitation center is still under construction. The two existing operating rooms will be renovated and the rooms of the existing hospital will be repurposed into assisted living rooms.

Byrom expects the entire project to be done around January or February 2021.

Darnall adding specialties, programs and child care

BY DAVID A. BRYANT
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Nearly three years in its new 1.6 million-square-foot facility, Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center at Fort Hood is expanding and growing patient services.

The hospital system serves nearly 100,000 beneficiaries, and consists of the main hospital with primary care and emergency services along with inpatient medical and behavioral health services. Darnall has a 151-bed capacity.

On an average day, Darnall sees 3,700 visitors, which equates to roughly 1 million encounters per year. Of those visits, about 1.2 million prescriptions keep its 13 pharmacies busy.

Darnall's command team, led by its new commander Col. Richard G. Malish, says the mission is to provide quality, patient-centered care that promotes soldier readiness, as well as community health and resilience.

Aside from the main hospital on post, Darnall's primary care clinics are on the installation and within neighboring communities. Of the primary care clinics, five are patient-centered medical homes, four are soldier-centered medical homes and four are community-based medical homes.

Darnall has over 40 medical specialties, and recently added a rheumatologist, a spine surgeon and a hand surgeon.

Darnall has received recognition for its level of care. In 2019, Darnall was awarded the Practice Greenhealth Award- Top 25

Environmental Excellence Award, the DHA High Reliability Organization Award for Patient Engagement and received the Joint Commission Gold Seal Accreditation.

Delivering babies is an important part of what happens at Darnall, with 2,031 babies born in 2019. A layette program sponsored by individual units ensures each baby delivered receives a unit-branded gift before leaving the hospital.

TREATING INJURIES

Darnall also started a Children's Waiting Room in the main hospital to provide up to two hours of child supervision while parents attend medical appointments.

The hospital now has two Da Vinci robots and one Mako to facilitate robot-assisted surgeries.

Darnall hosted the Joint Emergency Medicine Exercise with Air Force and Navy Medicine residents from multiple services to better prepare residency graduates to serve in operational medical positions.

To help soldiers dealing with fitness-related injuries, Darnall maintains/operates the Fort Hood Sparta Clinic open during morning physical training. It provides early evaluation and treatment for acute musculoskeletal injuries.

In January 2017, the Fort Hood Intrepid Spirit Center began patient treatment, caring for soldiers suffering from traumatic brain injuries, as well as post-traumatic stress and other psychological health conditions. The \$11 million facility was privately funded through the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund. It is the fourth in a series of nine such facilities to open on military bases across the country.

Art and music therapy have been integral components of the Intrepid Spirit Center's multidisciplinary approach to restoring a service member's medical readiness for more than a year. The center is one component of the comprehensive system of behavioral health care offered for service members and their families at Darnall.

MEDICAL HOMES

Darnall also offers four U.S. Army Medical Homes that function as family-practice clinics off post and work in conjunction with the hospital. The locations include:

- The Killeen facility is at 3404 Kaydence Court, off Elms Road near Stan Schlueter Loop.
- The West Killeen Medical Home is at 5200 Bunny Trail. This year, West Killeen became the pilot site for Darnall's first QUiC (Quality, urgent, Internet and Phone Care) clinic.
- The Harker Heights Medical Home is in Market Heights at 201 E. Central Texas Expressway, Suite 200.
- The Copperas Cove Medical Home Clinic is at 458 Town Square on West Business Highway 190.

In 2012, the first three clinics received their initial National Committee for Quality Assurance certification and are in the review process for recertification. The West Killeen Medical Home opened in 2018. Each clinic is capable of servicing more than 8,000 patients. The clinics offer women's health care, well baby and child exams, sports physicals and school immunizations, minor surgery, a pharmacy and lab services.



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EDUCATION

Bonds help Killeen ISD manage growth, improve facilities

BY HUNTER KING
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

The Killeen Independent School District had an enrollment of 45,141 on the last day of the 2018-2019 school year and the district is projecting an enrollment of 45,950 at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, according to Taina Maya, district spokeswoman.

KISD opened Maude Moore Wood Elementary School and broke ground on a new high school on Chaparral Road, which is set to open in the fall of 2022.

The district also kicked off the projects from a 2018 bond worth \$426 million. The projects include:

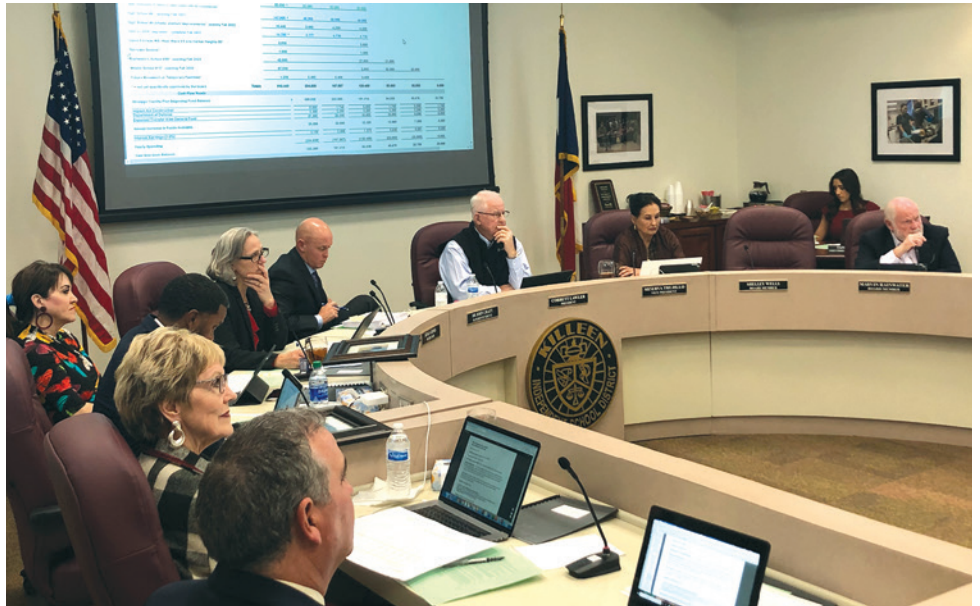
- East Ward/West Ward Elementary Consolidation Campus
- Clifton Park/Bellaire Elementary
- Sugar Loaf/Pershing Park Elementary
- High School #6
- Elementary School #36

OTHER 2019 NEWS

The KISD bond steering committee met four times in the fall and came to a consensus to present a \$265 million bond recommendation to the board of trustees. The board approved the recommendation Jan. 28 with a 4-2 vote.

The district also improved in the Texas Education Agency's academic accountability ratings, receiving an 86, a 10-point increase from the 2018 ratings.

The district's board of trustees approved a compensation plan that increased salaries for most employees. The plan gave a 6.6% to 10% general pay increase for all teachers dependent on the teachers' level of experience. The base starting salary for full-time teachers with no experience rose from \$47,000 to \$50,300. Other employees of the district received pay increases



Killeen ISD school board members decided to put two bond propositions before voters this year.

as well under the plan. Bus drivers received an 8% pay increase with a potential of \$4,000 per year added on through safety and attendance incentives; auxiliary staff received a 6% pay increase; librarians, counselors and nurses received a 4.5% increase and all other employees received a 3.5% increase.

The first class of the Early College High School graduated just under 200 students who earned an associate degree.

The district's education foundation awarded 28 grants worth \$119,217.

2020 OUTLOOK

The board of trustees approved placing the \$265 million bond proposal on the May 2, 2020 ballot. Residents will vote to approve or deny the bond in May.

The \$265 million bond includes two new elementary schools, the rebuilding of Harker Heights and Pebbles elementary schools, the renovation of

Ellison High School and upgrades to the football stadiums at Shoemaker, Ellison and Harker Heights high schools.

The bond steering committee approved the initial recommendation at the fourth meeting of the committee on Dec. 17 with a 50-3 vote.

The proposal was broken into two propositions. The first, Proposition A, includes \$209 million for all of the school construction projects.

The second, Proposition B, includes \$56 million for the stadium upgrades. State law requires stadium bonds, or other extracurricular projects, must be separate from instructional or educational projects.

The new Nolan Middle School on Warriors Path in Harker Heights will open in the fall of 2020. The school allows the district to provide STEM programming to more middle school students.

Killeen High School renovations also will begin this year.

Enrollment hits new high in Copperas Cove ISD

BY WENDY SLEDD
SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

Enrollment numbers at Copperas Cove ISD continue to climb as families relocate to the safe community that provides a quality education for elementary and secondary students. CCISD's highest enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year peaked at 8,290. As of Feb. 5, CCISD had 8,412 students enrolled with the highest number climbing to 8,487 in November.

The projected peak for student enrollment this year is 8,472. Of the 8,412 students, 2,050 (24%) of them are military-connected children. As the number of students continues to climb, CCISD is conducting a demographic study to determine the direction of growth in the district, evaluate facilities and enhance further long-range planning.

CCISD Deputy Superintendent of Operations and Support Rick Kirkpatrick said the purpose of the demographic study is to better prepare the district for the future by forecasting future enrollment.

"This allows the district to make the best possible decision on school attendance zones, facility planning and existing campus capacity and needs for expansion," Kirkpatrick said. "This year, CCISD is considering several projects to improve the use of current facilities. Roofing and HVAC replacement projects are being considered for Copperas Cove High School while a renovation is being considered for an existing building that



S. C. Lee eighth grader Riley Wood signs the American and Texas pledges in her classroom each day.

will be used as a district training facility for staff."

Hallways in both the 200 and 300 wings of Copperas Cove High School were widened to allow the increased number of students to easily move to their next classrooms.

Crossroads High School received a new metal roof and the HVAC was replaced in the main building, auditorium and D wing.

"In addition, the district is in the planning phase for remodeling an existing auditorium at Crossroads High School into functional classroom space to handle the increased number of students attending this campus," Kirkpatrick said.

Outdoor eating areas were built at both junior high schools and Copperas Cove High School to accommodate more students during the lunch and breakfast serving periods.

The number of students at Fairview/

Miss Jewell doubled this year when the district renovated one-half of the school that previously housed the Boys and Girls Club Program and other district offices. The school can now hold 700-800 students at capacity.

With the continued growth on FM 116 toward Gatesville, House Creek Elementary, Williams/Ledger Elementary, and S.C. Lee Junior High are at capacity and no longer accept transfer students. Students attending those schools must live in the zoned areas.

New families moving into Copperas Cove or families relocating to a new home in school district boundaries may enter their street address using the CCISD website at https://www.ccisd.com/273994_3 to determine which school their children will attend.

Wendy Sledd is director of communications for the Copperas Cove Independent School District.



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Impact Aid helps local school districts provide services to military children.

Federal Impact Aid funds support local school districts

BY HUNTER KING
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Federal Impact Aid funding provides school districts with money based on the number of federally connected students that live in and attend the district. Those students do not pay property taxes like other residents in the district.

Heavy Impact Aid is what the Killeen Independent School District currently receives and it is the highest level of Impact Aid a district can receive.

Copperas Cove Independent School District no longer receives Heavy Impact Aid because it fell under the threshold of 35% of the student population being federally connected.

The district received around \$9.1 million in 2018/2019 from Impact Aid in the district's final year of the hold-harmless provision, according to June Crawford, the district's chief financial officer.

The hold-harmless provision keeps the district from losing all of its federal aid at one time. The district estimates that they will receive around \$300,000 from federal Impact Aid.

KISD reached the 35% threshold this year and will receive around \$46 million, according to district estimates. There was concern that the district would not meet the threshold, and the district has projected that it will fall under 35% in the next year or two. If the district falls under 35%, it will begin to lose funding over the following five years.

KISD has been transferring Impact Aid money into the district's strategic facilities fund to help build new schools and complete other necessary projects. If the district falls under the 35% mark, it will have to find other ways to fund new projects to accommodate the district's growth.

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Texas A&M-Central Texas celebrates its first decade

BY KAREN CLOS

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-CENTRAL TEXAS

A&M-Central Texas celebrates its first decade during the 2019-2020 academic year — the 10th of 11 regional universities affiliated with the Texas A&M University System and one of the most unique universities in Texas and the nation.

The University's Institutional Research Office reports that 2,293 students are registered for the spring 2019 semester, with 65% taking at least one course online.

As an “upper-level” university, A&M-Central Texas embraces its mission of serving the transfer student who has begun, but not completed, an undergraduate degree, and undergraduate admissions policies are open to students who have a 2.0 GPA and a minimum of 30 hours of college-level coursework. Graduate admissions vary by program. The A&M-Central Texas annual budget for FY 2020 is \$36,090,399.

As Texas' only upper-level university, A&M-Central Texas offers 28 undergraduate degrees and 18 graduate degrees. Since 2009, 7,527 students have earned their degree, including 302 graduating in December 2019.

A&M-Central Texas' combined tuition and fees was cited by College for All Texans as among the most affordable undergraduate degrees.

A&M-Central Texas keeps the needs of adult learners in mind with flexible schedules and a wide selection of courses offered as face-to-face, hybrid, and online.

New degree programs include Criminal Justice, Information Technology, Human Performance and Exercise Physiology, Music and Mechanical Engineering Technology.

At the graduate level, new degrees include the business degree in One Planet Leadership, Higher Education Leadership and English.

A&M-Central Texas programs have earned national recognition, named by U.S. News and World Report in 2019 for Best Online Graduate Criminal Justice Programs for Veterans, Best Online Graduate Criminal Justice



Maria Sanchez talks with a professor during Warrior Preview Day at Texas A&M-Central Texas.

Programs, Best Online Graduate Business Programs (excluding MBA) for Veterans, Best Online MBA Programs for Veterans, Best Online Graduate Business Programs, and Bestline Online MBA Program.

Additional significant achievements include national accreditation earned by the A&M-Central Texas College of Education's Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program awarded by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. The College of Business Administration hosted the first SUSTEX Summit, focused on the challenges and successes of sustainable business practices, and the College of Arts and Sciences introduced the B.Mus., an undergraduate degree in music in partnership with Temple College.

Additionally, the A&M Central Texas Graduate School continues its efforts to reach out to communities within the region. A graduate school fair to be held spring 2020 will bring together graduate programs from the region to facilitate interested potential students pursue their post-undergraduate degrees.

A&M-Central Texas was recognized by the ALL IN Challenge Awards for achieving a 2019 election student

participation rate of 45.8% and was also selected as a NASPA LEAD Initiative Institution for its success in civic learning and democratic engagement.

Also, for the first time in the university's history, the A&M-Central Texas ROTC joined 35,000 military personnel and civilians in The 35th anniversary Army 10 Miler in Washington, D.C.

The A&M Central Texas Office of Research and Economic Development announced that the university was awarded in fall 2019, a highly competitive \$4.2M cybersecurity contract from The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and The United States Air Force.

External research funds continue to grow with more than \$1 million per year. It is anticipated that external research funds will more than double in the next 10 years.

Working collaboratively with civic and business leaders in Killeen and throughout the region, the university is exploring the development of a research park on campus to further support the economic development in the region and beyond.

For more information, visit www.tamuct.edu.

Central Texas College serves community with variety of classes

BY BRUCE VASBINDER
CENTRAL TEXAS COLLEGE

Central Texas College has been providing higher educational opportunities to area residents for more than 50 years.

Since opening its doors to more than 2,000 students in 1967, CTC has evolved into a unique institution focusing on an affordable, accessible education.

The school's diverse student population includes nearly 6,000 students per semester at its Killeen and Fort Hood campuses, more than 18,000 students at sites across the globe and 10,000 students taking classes online. Nearly 900 students worldwide graduated from CTC in the fall 2019 semester.

CTC is the top college choice for graduating high school seniors in the area as more than 20 percent of local high school come to CTC — the most affordable higher education option for students in Central Texas. Local students can save nearly \$15,000 in tuition and fees by completing an associate degree with CTC before moving on to a four-year university.

With more than 100 associate degrees and certificates of completion available in many diverse fields, CTC prepares students for careers or to transfer to a four-year university.

Programs of study include aviation science, business administration, logistics, communications, computer science, computer-aided drafting and design, electronics technology, industrial technology, interdisciplinary studies, language, mathematics, nursing and paramedic, science and computer and information technology.

Distance education or online class offerings continue to expand.

CTC recently added online degree and certificate programs in the areas of business, information technology, early child development, logistics, cyber defense and mental health services.

CTC now offers more than 400 classes and 60 degree and certificate programs which can be completed entirely via distance education.

To further assist those with busy



Central Texas College Culinary Arts student and “Chopped” champion Kim Waring prepares to take her blackened chicken and mashed potato entrée to the judges during the cooking competition.

work and family schedules, CTC offers a Weekend and Evening College program which enable students to complete any of 27 associate degree plans or 11 certificate programs at night and on weekends. Programs include the evening/weekend Licensed Vocational Nursing, Office Technology, Computer Electronics, Industrial Technology and Business Management programs.

CTC continues to foster a strong relationship with Fort Hood.

The third military articulation paramedic cohort class will graduate in April 2020 and registration is underway now for the fourth cohort in June 2020.

The program awards credit to military or Department of Defense first responders for their experience, knowledge and military trauma courses allowing them to articulate from their current EMT certification to a paramedic in two semesters.

Another program designed for transitioning active-duty military personnel and veterans is the CTC-Fort Hood Systems, Applications and Products in Data Processing (SAP) cohort program. It provides students

the necessary training to compete for employment opportunities across 25 industries including energy and national resources, financial services, public services and service industries. The third cohort graduated last December and the fourth class is underway now.

CTC's Continuing Education program expands each semester with new classes in a variety of areas including business, personal enrichment and career development. Courses include pharmacy technician, clinical medical assistant, certified veterinarian assistant, licensed massage therapy, professional truck driving, certified nurse aid and the most recent addition blacksmithing. A variety of exercise/fitness classes are also available along with numerous arts, hobby and crafting classes. And for youngsters, College for Kids classes are offered year-round.

Some of the 2019 accomplishments included the new Eagles' Nest Food Pantry to assist students in need and curb a growing trend of food insecurities among college students. Maintained by the CTC Foundation, the food pantry is way for students to obtain a variety of non-perishable food items and canned goods for themselves and family members.

The CTC Child Development Center earned reaccreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. In addition to a childcare facility, the center serves as an academic and skills training center for students in the Early Childhood Development program.

Also in 2019, CTC completed a facelift of its campus mall area between the Student Center, library and Academic building with new landscaping, umbrella tables, seats and walkways. The duck pond also received a new waterfall feature and other beautification upgrades.

Moving forward, CTC looks to continue enhancing its alliances with the local school districts and the community through its' dual credit programs, the Early College High School, STEM Academy and the newly signed Cyber Information Pledge.

University of Mary Hardin-Baylor marks 175th anniversary in 2020

The following questions were submitted to James Stafford, the spokesman for the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor:

Were any building projects completed in the past year? Are any building projects underway?

In 2019, UMHB dedicated its newest residence hall, Lord Hall. The 46,000-square-foot facility offers attractive dormitory-style housing for up to 214 freshmen. UMHB also expanded Hardy Hall to enable it to serve as headquarters for both the physical therapy and occupational therapy programs. The facility's new wing offers state-of-the-art learning spaces such as a driving simulation lab and a convenience store and Moe's Southwest Grill, where OT students can learn how to help patients master basic skills needed in work settings.

UMHB also completed construction of a new design lab for one of its fastest growing programs, engineering.

What new initiatives have been undertaken in the past year?

In the summer of 2018, UMHB announced the creation of the Mayborn College of Health Sciences. Named in honor of Sue Mayborn, the college includes a variety of health-related degree programs organized into three schools: the Scott & White School of Nursing, the School of Exercise and Sport Science, and School of Health Professions.

The School of Health Professions includes three graduate degree programs, the Doctor of Physical Therapy program, Master of Science in Occupational Therapy program, and the Master of Arts in Counseling program.

Another new program in 2019 was TeachingMyWay, an alternative certification program that provides a way for individuals with bachelor's degrees to acquire Texas teaching certification online through a competency-based platform. Based on this delivery, most students will be able to earn their teaching certificate in seven months to a year for \$6,000.

What initiatives and programs are planned in the coming year?

The Master of Science in Occupational Therapy program began in January and will produce the first cohort of graduates in 2022. The Physician Assistant degree program launches in 2021.

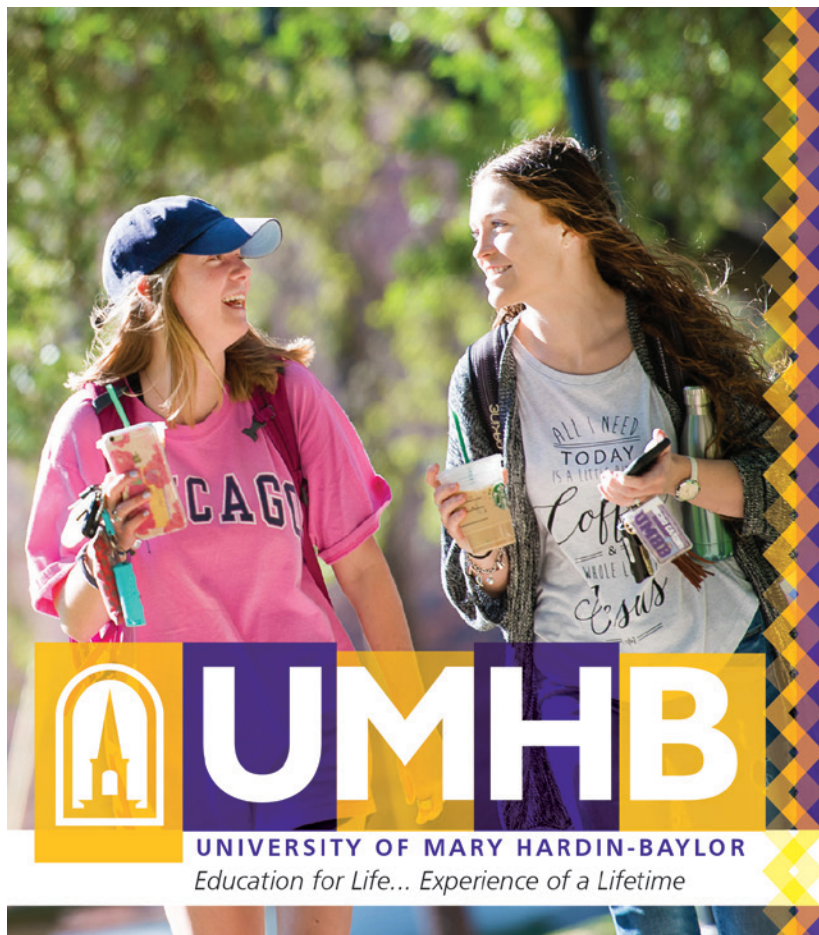
This year will mark the university's 175th anniversary, and a number of celebrations are planned: A special exhibit will open in February at the Parker House. In early April, a 175th anniversary dinner will be held for the President's Leadership Circle. In mid-April, a Charter Celebration Weekend trip to the school's original campus in Independence will include a chapel service and lunch at the historic Independence Baptist Church. The university will sponsor a float in Belton's Fourth of July parade, and a big birthday bash is planned in October.

What is the current enrollment?






3,760 on campus. 3,846 including online.

How many students graduated in the last spring class?

544 students were awarded degrees. Of those, 481 received baccalaureate degrees, 46 received master's degrees and 17 earned doctoral degrees.



CAMPUS PROFILE

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RECREATION

Area high school sports programs thrive in 2019

BY CLAY WHITTINGTON
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

Killeen ISD experienced another impressive year filled with athletic achievements in 2019.

Approximately 30 miles away, however, the small town of Lampasas thrived.

The string of success began when Alyssa Ayers, a sophomore, emerged from the state powerlifting meet with a bronze medal. Then, both soccer teams reached the playoffs, and the Badgers baseball team advanced to the postseason's second round for the first time since 2006.

In May, inspired by the death of local legend Johnny "Lam" Jones in March, senior Cameron Everts won the 300-meter hurdles state championship along with serving as the anchor leg on the team's run to the silver medal in the 1,600 relay.

Just days later, the Lady Badgers golf team placed second at state, setting the stage for an unprecedented football season.

With junior quarterback Ace Whitehead — the Associated Press Sports Editors Class 4A Offensive Player of the Year — guiding the way, the Badgers secured the most wins (13) in school history en route to the program's second state semifinal appearance.

The district-champion Badgers saw their 12-game win streak end at the hands of eventual state champion Carthage.

While Lampasas basked in the spotlight throughout 2019, plenty of other impressive performances took place around the area with many occurring at Ellison.

The most significant came at the state wrestling meet, where senior Isiah Brown upset the undefeated defending state champion to win the 220-pound title and become Killeen ISD's first champion in wrestling.

Additionally, Eagles triple jumper Stacy Brown claimed gold at the state track meet, Ellison baseball players Edward Eakin and Preston Mills landed on the all-state second team after guiding the program into the playoffs for the first time in 10 years, the Lady Eagles reached the soccer playoffs for the first time since 2005, and sophomore powerlifter Lagi Ah Sang broke her own state record with a 435-pound deadlift.

Also at the state powerlifting meet, Copperas Cove junior Alyssa Arnold used a state-record 310-pound bench press to propel her to a state championship, and in volleyball, longtime Lady Bulldawgs head coach Cari Lowery collected her 800th all-time victory, placing her among the top 20 most winning coaches in the state's history.

Elsewhere, Shoemaker's softball team made its first playoff

appearance since 2009, and on the football field, after failing to produce more than two victories last season, Shoemaker and Harker Heights each rebounded to reach the playoffs.

Additionally, on the track, Lady Bulldawgs sprinter Nadia Robinson was placed on the all-state team.

But few runners could compete with Salado's Jaci McGregor, who won bronze medals at the state track meet in both the 1,600 and 3,200 as a sophomore before opening her junior season by winning Class 4A state cross country championship.

At Gatesville, the Hornets saw the end of an era as Kyle Cooper stepped down from his role as athletic director and head football coach after 12 years, ushering in alum Luke Howard as the new head football coach and elevating longtime head volleyball coach Rickey Phillips into the athletic director position.



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UIL realignment shifts districts for high school teams

BY CLAY WHITTINGTON
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

The University Interscholastic League released its biannual realignment in February, altering the landscape of high school athletics for the upcoming years.

The move, however, merely tweaked the construction of District 12-6A, in which most large Killeen-area teams play.

Waco along with perennial power Waco Midway were removed from the district, while Bryan was brought in to join Killeen, Ellison, Harker Heights, Shoemaker, Copperas Cove, Belton and Temple.

There were effects, though, as shrinking the district to eight teams allows for an additional game prior to beginning the seven-game battle for playoff berths, and while the Lions and Panthers left the district, they did not go far.

Midway and Waco moved into an ultra-talented District 11-6A along

with Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Duncanville, Mansfield, Mansfield Lake Ridge and Waxahachie, making each a potential first-round postseason opponent for District 12-6A teams.

The setup remains the same in District 12-6A for basketball and volleyball, and it should hold true when the alignments for other sports are released no later than March 16.

Smaller classifications, however, do not always maintain such cohesion.

After reaching the state semifinals in football last year, Lampasas moves to District 13-4A, Division I with Burnet, Canyon Lake, Fredericksburg, Taylor and incoming Austin Johnson (LBJ). The Jaguars, who replace Liberty Hill, drop to Class 4A after years at Class 5A, including last season, when they went 8-3.

In basketball and volleyball, Lampasas jumps to Region I, joining Brownwood, Gatesville, Glen Rose and Stephenville to make up District 6-4A.

Gatesville's football team drops to

Division II, making up part of District 9-4A with China Spring, Jarrell, Robinson, Salado and Waco Connally. For the previous two seasons, the Hornets competed in District 5-4A, Division I against Brownwood, Waco La Vega, Stephenville and China Spring.

Elsewhere, Salado joins Burnet, Georgetown Gateway, Jarrell, Taylor and Lake Belton for basketball and volleyball in District 19-4A.

Entering its first year of existence, Lake Belton will not have a varsity football team and will play a limited schedule in 2021. It will be involved in the next realignment prior to the 2022-2023 school year.

In Class 3A, Florence's football team will compete in District 13-4A along with Buffalo, Clifton, Franklin, Lexington, Riesel and Rogers.

In basketball and volleyball, the Buffaloes and Lady Buffaloes are paired with Caldwell, Cameron Yoe, Lexington, Little River-Academy, Rockdale and Rogers.

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UMHB athletics thrive in 2019, but football team is penalized

BY CLAY WHITTINGTON
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor had plenty of success in athletics in 2019, but the Crusaders also experienced a costly setback.

In October, the NCAA vacated all of the football team's wins during 2016 and 2017, including the 2016 Division III national championship, as a response to rules violations by the program. The infractions revolved around head coach Pete Fredenburg loaning athletes his car.

UMHB won 29 games during the span, beating Wisconsin-Oshkosh 10-7 for the 2016 national title in Stagg Bowl XLIV.

While the punishment was certainly a blow for the team, it did not derail a successful 2019 campaign.

The Crusaders won the American Southwest Conference championship and advanced to the quarterfinals of the Division III playoffs behind defensive tackle Joey Longoria, who was a semifinalist for the Gagliardi Trophy. The award is presented to Division III's most outstanding player.

UMHB finished with 12-1 overall record and was ranked fourth and sixth in the country's two major Top 25 polls.

The season-ending 26-7 loss to Wisconsin-Whitewater was just the third time the team was defeated at Crusader Stadium in seven seasons, snapping a 27-game win streak inside the stadium.

OTHER SPORTS

In other sports, the Crusaders volleyball team produced a perfect 15-0 showing en route to winning the ASC West Division, but saw their season conclude in the ASC Tournament's championship match.

The senior duo of Jenna Gillean and Miranda Klein were named honorable mentions on the American Volleyball Coaches Association All-West Region squad.

They finished the season with a 24-8 overall record.

In just its second year of existence, both cross country programs excelled.

Despite being in its infancy, the women's team qualified for the NCAA Regional Meet, where it placed 20th after finishing third in the conference meet.

It was the first time in its short history the Crusaders qualified for regionals as a team. The men's team placed ninth in the ASC meet.

UMHB's soccer programs also put together strong showings with the women's team navigating its way to the ASC Tournament finals to cap off a 12-7-2 season. Dannah Fritschle, Chelsea Graham and Taylor Marques were each named to the United Soccer Coaches All-West Region Third Team.

For the men, the Crusaders posted a record of 11-6-2, advancing to the semifinals of the conference tournament behind sophomore Nick Villanueva, who was placed on the United States Soccer Coaches All-West Region First Team.

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Armed Services YMCA continues its upward trajectory

BY STEPHANIE RATTS GRISSOM
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

The Armed Services YMCA has a long-standing tradition of serving the community. They do that by providing support and programming to meet residents' ever-changing needs.

"As a veteran YMCA leader, (Sheri Yerrington) knows the importance of programming for communities and is passionate about developing them here at the ASYMCA," said marketing director Amanda Carlson.

Yerrington took the helm of the ASYMCA in 2017 shortly after the facility on Mountain Lion Road in Harker Heights opened its doors in 2016. Since that time, the Heights facility has shown tremendous growth in both overall membership and programming.

The facility showed 15 percent growth last year in its programming.

"In 2019, between our core military programs and our wellness programs, we more than doubled the amount

of program options. This dramatic growth of program offering resulted in an 86.79% increase of facility usage," Carlson wrote in an email.

One such program is the Children's Waiting Room, available to all service members and their dependents, which provides up to two hours of child care during medical appointments.

A location was already in operation in Copperas Cove. Another location opened in February in Harker Heights, and a third opened in March at Fort Hood.

Children's programs account for the most growth. Carlson said, "We were able to serve 799 children with our ever-growing child programs." For example, the swim lesson program offered 536 sessions. Other children's programs included cooking classes, an expansion of child fitness and STEM classes, such as the Lego Master Builder Class, "Code Kid," a basic computer coding class, and Mad Scientist Class.

Senior programs also saw an increase. Monthly senior luncheons, which pair

healthy food with a talk by medical professionals on some aspect of senior health care, showed an average attendance of 70 people per lunch. The ASYMCA also hosted 24 senior field trips, with an average attendance of 25 people per trip.

Despite the facilities ties to the Armed Services, programming is available to the entire Central Texas community, Carlson said.

Programs such as Child Watch — before- and after-school childcare programs available at 41 elementary schools in the Killeen, Copperas Cove, Florence, Belton, and Lampasas school districts — summer camps, holiday camps, and Kid's Night Out, are all open to the public.

More programs and classes are being developed all the time to best meet the needs of the community.

"2020 brings great promise for both the Armed Services YMCA Killeen and the programs we are able to offer our neighbors," Carlson said.

New executive director takes reins at Vive Les Arts in Killeen

BY EMILY HILLEY-SIERZCHULA
HERALD CORRESPONDENT

A new executive director at Vive Les Arts is bringing her passion for the arts to Killeen's community theater.

"I'm new to this position, although I'm not new to the area," said Jami Salter, who taught for 15 years in Killeen ISD before joining VLA. "It was a real honor to be a teacher and I've had so many wonderful students, but this has allowed me to use my 30 years of experience in the theater arts in a new way. This is the most exciting professional experience I've had."

Salter said she's been impressed by the wealth of talent she's seen over the past five months. "The quality of product we have here is amazing and I would love to share it with everyone in the community, and increase the involvement of our community members," she said.

In the meantime, improvements to the facility continue. "Through

ON STAGE THIS SEASON

- "The 39 Steps": March 20-22, 27-29
- "Beauty and the Beast Jr.": May 8-17 (Children's Theatre Production)
- "Matilda": June 5-7, 12-14.

For more information, call 254-526-9090 or go to vlakilleen.org.

Vive Les Arts is at 3401 S. W.S. Young Drive.

Tickets for the Main Stage are \$20 for adults, \$18 for military members, seniors, students and teachers, and \$15 for children age 12 and younger.

Children's Theatre tickets are \$14 for adults, \$12 for military members, seniors, students and teachers, and \$10 for children age 12 and younger.

Season memberships are available for \$90 for adults and \$85 for military members, seniors, students and teachers.

the generosity of our volunteers and donors, we've been able to upgrade our house lights, purchase a new sound system and have installed new stage curtains."

Next on the agenda is redesigning the interior of the theater.

Of course, the real action is on stage. "I can't possibly choose a favorite (upcoming production)," Salter said. "The last show of the season is 'Matilda,' and I will say that this tale by

Roald Dahl is always a crowd-pleaser and is one of my favorites. 'Beauty and Beast' also will be quite a tale."

For the grown-ups, "The 39 Steps" starts March 20. "It's a Hitchcock tale twisted into a comedy that plays in theatrical magic. It's hilarious."

Vive Les Arts has been a fixture in the city since 1976. "We've always been committed to producing current works that are in line with what's just coming off Broadway," Salter said.



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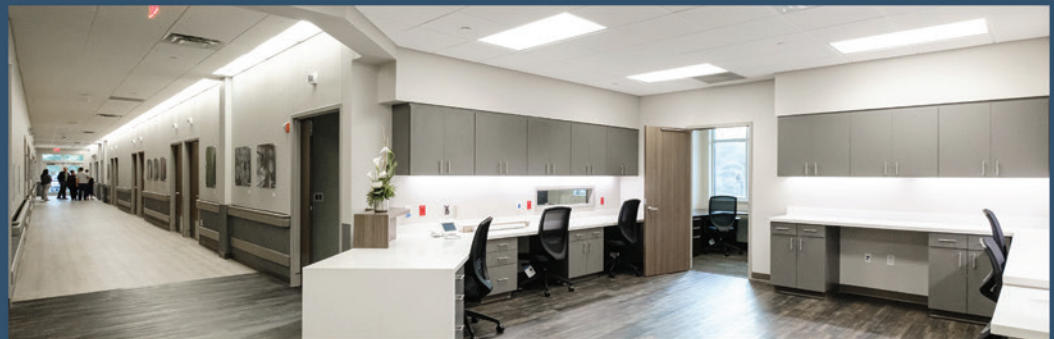
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