



Carmage Walls
Commentary Prize

2019 Entry Form

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Is your newspaper under 50,000 circulation or above 50,000 circulation? Less than

Please give a brief explanation of issues discussed and the results achieved. (This space will expand as you type in your comments.) Each of these editorials deals with an aspect of economic development and why those opportunities are so important to the renaissance of this community. Our editorial page has equated economic development in Lufkin as the business world equivalent of the circle of life. People with quality jobs are more willing to spend money on discretionary items because they are not worried about buying the essential items they must have on a day-to-day basis. That money boosts the quantity and quality of municipal services and educational opportunities, which in turn makes the community a more attractive place for businesses and their employees. A number of new manufacturing facilities have opened or expanded over the last year, adding 500 jobs to our workforce.

OPINION

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The Lufkin Daily News editorial board

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Don't hesitate to ask for help in wake of storms

After several weeks of thunderstorms, tornadoes and severe weather across East Texas, my heart goes out to the individuals and families who are mourning the loss of a loved one or whose property was damaged by the storms.



TRENT ASHBY

As we rebuild and recover, my family and I will continue to keep our fellow East Texans in our thoughts and prayers, and I would encourage you and yours to do the same.

For anyone needing assistance, please don't hesitate to call either my Austin office at (512) 463-0508 or my district office in Lufkin at 634-2762. With that, here's an update from your state Capitol.

Legislative update. This week, the Texas House took decisive action on a number of bills that help protect our Second Amendment rights. One of the bills I'd like to highlight, House Bill 516, provides immunity to property or business owners who allow the carrying of handguns by a license holder on their property.

Current law is unclear about whether liability applies to property owners who allow for open or concealed carry on their property, and

this legislation would provide clear protections to those property and business owners who allow law-abiding gun owners to carry a weapon on their property.

Another bill, House Bill 302, protects the rights of owners and tenants of residential units who lawfully possess firearms in their apartments or condominiums. Currently, an individual could be charged for unlawfully transporting a firearm from their car to their residence if the landlord displays a sign prohibiting firearms.

As a lifelong gun owner, I was proud to support both pieces of legislation that I believe will further protect the rights of Texans across the state.

Finally, I had the opportunity to present three bills in the House Committee on Land & Resource Management this week dealing with the ever-controversial topic of eminent domain.

For private property owners facing condemnation of their land, the system can be challenging. Many landowners are unfamiliar with the full extent of their rights, much less the obligations of a condemning entity, and are often faced with a lot of uncertainty when approached by entities seeking to acquire property through eminent domain.

All three bills deal with different stages of

the process, from the initial meeting of the landowner and the condemning entity, all the way until taxes are due on land that has been taken.

I believe these bills strengthen private property rights by empowering landowners with more information about their existing rights and the obligations of those wishing to conduct a survey. These bills level the playing field for all involved parties.

Reminders. The mobile office is on the road this month and looks forward to seeing you on the following dates, in the following locations: from 9-11 a.m. Wednesday at the Leon County Courthouse in Centerville or 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Madison County Courthouse Annex in Madisonville; from 9-11 a.m. May 15 at the Houston County Courthouse in Crockett or from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Trinity County Courthouse in Groveton. You can also come see us from 9-11 a.m. May 22 at the San Augustine Courthouse in San Augustine.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact our office if we can help you in any way. Our district office may be reached at 634-2762, or you can call my Capitol office at (512) 463-0508.

Trent Ashby is the state representative for District 57 that includes Angelina, Houston, Leon, Madison, San Augustine and Trinity counties. His email address is trent.ashby@house.state.tx.us.

OUR OPINION

First-Class State's recognition of airport a potential boon for business

The Angelina County Airport recently was recognized as the most improved in the state in 2018 by the Texas Department of Transportation.

The award is the result of years of work by many, according to airport manager Gary Letney. Over the last few years, airport employees and supporters have focused on utilizing state grants as much as they could to improve the landing strip, hangars, utilities and security at the airport, Letney said.

Among those instrumental in that work, he said, were former manager Randy Carswell, the airport crew, current and past Angelina County commissioners and previous County Judge Wes Suiter. He also pointed to the Experimental Aircraft Association for their work on the airport and current County Judge Don Lymbery as being a part of that organization. Letney said each of the commissioners, as well as the sheriff's office and his crew, offered vehicles, tools or expertise to help make improvements.

"All of that stuff was getting noticed by the state, and the state was looking at how beautiful the airport is and the things Gary had been doing to get the airport noticed and improve the airport appearance and usability," Lymbery said.

The airport won "Best Airport in Texas" in 1997, when Lufkin and Angelina County were booming. Following the downturn in 2008, the airport stagnated, and any more awards seemed a long way off, Letney said.

"But, boy, in 2016, when the uptick started ... one of the things that really did improve at the airport was the economic output. It went from \$5.5 million in 2011 to a 2018 number of \$26 million."

That potential for additional economic development would further improve if Lufkin's bid to establish a foreign-trade zone is approved. A foreign-trade zone is an area physically located within the United States but considered outside U.S. customs territory. Among the possibilities: air transport services, freight forwarding, warehousing and high-tech oriented businesses with products having a high value-to-weight ratio — for example, electronics or optics.

Several white papers over the last generation have been written on airports as engines of economic development. (A white paper is an authoritative report or guide that informs readers concisely about a complex issue and presents the issuing body's philosophy on the matter. It is meant to help readers understand an issue, solve a problem or make a decision.)

Just as in the past shipping, railway and then highway systems have played vital roles in determining a city's economic power, global air transportation systems will do so in the future for cities, regions and countries. Airports are magnets for business and trade, and play a major role in the location of corporate and regional headquarters, service companies, research and development facilities and manufacturing sites, according to the publication strategy+business.

Airports move two kinds of things — goods or cargo and people, according to Richard L. Florida, an American urban studies theorist focusing on social and economic theory. He believes a good deal of the argument about airports and economic development has focused on moving things and the business and industries that grow up around that. But in today's economy, he says, the ability to move people who generate and share knowledge matters even more.

Letney can attest to the veracity of those theories.

When business owners are looking to move to the region, many fly in rather than driving, Letney said. "So it's the first thing they see about the county."

That good first impression is critical, because the prize is clear: becoming a magnet for business and commerce.



April has been a busy month

Wow. The month of April has been busy and that says a lot about our great city and the diversity of activities we have to keep us active and informed.

The Museum of East Texas opened a display in early April that featured art work and creations by "Young Scholars" in third, fourth and fifth grades from Anderson, Brandon, Brookholow, Coston and Slack elementary schools.

These creations were not only beautiful, but also extremely talented and spoke volumes about the time spent working on the projects. Thank you to every art teacher in LISD for teaching and nurturing these young artists and bringing their gifts and talent to display at our museum.

The Salvation Army held its annual banquet this month. It was well attended, and the program was a message within itself. What touched my heart was the closing prayer by Bob Flournoy when he used the phrase "we live in a community that helps people we do not even know." That prayer rang in my ears the rest of the day because it is something we experience each and every day and we just do not give it a second thought. We are so blessed as a community and we just share our resources. Thank you, Lufkin.

Thank you, T.L.L. Temple Foundation, for sharing the vision and message of Tom Luce to our community leaders this month.

Luce is an unselfish visionary from the Dallas area who recognizes the need for education in our great state. He recognizes that our state is growing and prospering in new industry and technology, and he wants the state's education system to be prepared for all the new future techniques coming our way.

Luce is projecting all this new activity to be occurring as the workforce grows by 40% in the next 18 years. His public policy group is called Texas 2036. He is realistic enough to know that it takes time to get the attention and commitment of state leaders and now is the time to become aware and move forward with a plan. He is generous enough with his time to share with us in East Texas and that will give us a voice in the future of education in Texas.

Angelina College President Michael Simon and Lufkin ISD Superintendent Lynn Torres were in attendance. With their input and leadership, I have no doubt that we will have a voice in the future of education in Texas.



BOB BROWN

Thank you, Wynn Rosser, Ellen Temple, Jay Shands and Tom Darmstadter with the Temple Foundation, for bringing Luce to our city to keep us informed.

The Angelina County Fair was a great success again this year, and we saw more than 1,000 young Angelina County youth display their animals, projects and talent for five days.

The fair ended in a sale the Saturday evening before Easter Sunday, and once again you — the great individuals and businesses of Angelina County — stepped forward and contributed more than \$400,000 to these young individuals.

The Angelina County Fair renews my faith in the future of our city, county and state each year. We do have a bright future and it is always gratifying to watch these young individuals step forward and shine. Good job, Todd Kassaw, chairman, and the Angelina County Fair board.

The graduation of the first class of Christian Men's Job Corp of Lufkin was held on Tuesday. This event marked the true beginning of a group of men who have turned their lives around and want to be better family leaders, skilled workers and volunteers in our community.

The program is led by C.D. Byndom Jr. and will, over time, result in changed lives of men willing to allow God to come into their heart and lead them in to beneficial careers and family leadership. Great job.

This past week, the Lufkin Host Lions Club has been busy presenting the Angelina County Benefit Rodeo and it, too, was a sight to behold. The behind-the-scenes work of the 200 Lions Club members does not go completely unnoticed.

Selling raffle tickets, popping popcorn, making cotton candy (thank you to the late Dr. George Thannisch, Mr. Cotton Candy), selling drinks in the stands, cooking hamburgers and hot dogs and selling programs takes a lot of time and energy. All the proceeds flow back into our community.

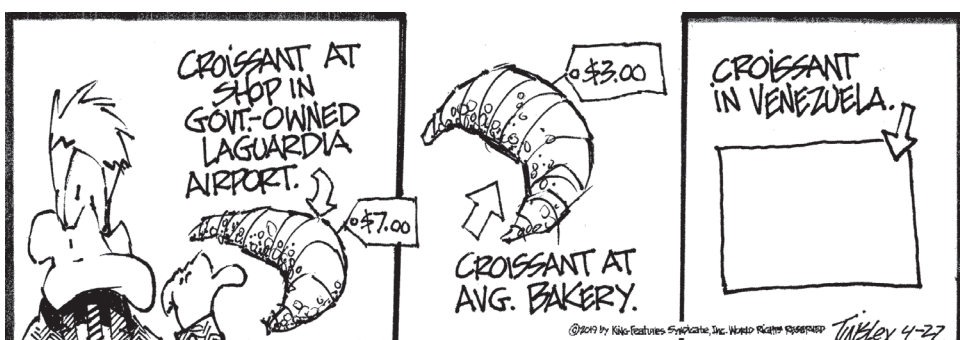
The State Supported Living Center is one benefactor, but several worthwhile agencies will benefit from all the hard work of our Noon Lions Club. Mike Mathis, you are my hero. Thanks for your energy and voice of the Angelina Benefit Rodeo.

Times are good and things are happening in Lufkin, Texas. Help someone this week and just do it because you care not to get credit. It will make both of you feel better.

Bob Brown is the mayor for the city of Lufkin. His email address is mayorbobbrown@cityoflufkin.com.

MALLARD FILLMORE

By Bruce Tinsley



HEADLINES IN Local HISTORY

- APRIL 28**
- One year ago**
 - A walking trail that cuts through Keltys Cemetery, the oldest in the city, is dedicated.
 - Lufkin ISD honors students at Superintendent's Honor Roll Breakfast.
 - Ten years ago**
 - Lufkin residents reconsider travel plans because of concerns about swine flu.
 - Lufkin High School optimistic as spring football practice gets underway.
 - Twenty years ago**
 - Angelina County commissioners grant partial tax abatement to American Freightways after hearing the company plans to open a trucking center in that will create about a dozen jobs.
 - Amy Bradford picks the perfect time to pitch a perfect game as the Lufkin Lady Panthers cruised past Molina Lady Jaguars 7-0 in bi-district playoffs.
- From the pages of The Lufkin Daily News, compiled by The History Center, TheHistoryCenterOnline.com.

TODAY IN HISTORY

- By The Associated Press
- Today is Sunday, April 28, the 118th day of 2019. There are 247 days left in the year.
- Today's Highlight in History:**
- On April 28, 1945, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and his mistress, Clara Petacci, were executed by Italian partisans as they attempted to flee the country.
 - On this date:
 - In 1788, Maryland became the seventh state to ratify the Constitution of the United States.
 - In 1789, there was a mutiny on the HMS Bounty as rebelling crew members of the British ship, led by Fletcher Christian, set the captain, William Bligh, and 18 others adrift in a launch in the South Pacific. (Bligh and most of the men with him reached Timor in 47 days.)

Have your say

To submit a letter to the editor, bring it to us at 300 Ellis Ave. in downtown Lufkin, mail it to P.O. Box 1089, Lufkin, TX 75902-1089, or visit an easy-to-use form at lufkindailynews.com/letters. Or you can email your letter to news@lufkindailynews.com.

Please limit your letters to 350 words. Be sure to include a daytime telephone number on your letter.

All letters are subject to editing for length and clarity, and unsigned letters will not be used. We will only publish one letter per writer during a 30-day period.

Your elected officials

- Let your elected officials know what you think. Here is contact information for each.
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