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WEEKEND



Best of 2024 nominations have started

It's time to decide "who's the best," and there is no one better to make the choices than the readers of The Port Arthur News and panews.com.

The Port Arthur News Best of 2024 contest is BACK, and like in years past, the effort is 100 percent reader-driven in three stages.

From now until April 12, you can nominate your favorite businesses and people from across the region.

The nominations can be made once a day at panews.com under the "Contest" tab at the top of the main page.

Those businesses, people and locations who secure the most nominations advance to our voting stage, which starts in May.

The time is now. Vote early and vote often at panews.com.

Today's forecast:



0 percent chance of rain,
high of 75, low of 56

DAILY PRAYER

Almighty God, Creator, You lovingly made all things, Fashioned in Your goodness and given; Help me to use the blessings I have With faith in a light not meant to be hidden. Amen.

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\$2

City ponders contract management services

By Mary Meaux
mary.meaux@panews.com

The city of Port Arthur's longtime relationship with a Houston company tasked with project and grant management was on the line during a recent city council workshop.

And while questions were raised on whether the services were needed, ultimately councilmem-

bers opted to retain the company and renew its contract.

Ardurra Group LLC has been a partner with the city for a number of years, including 2017 when Hurricane Harvey saw estimated damages of more than \$100 million that included about 80 projects.

Ardurra handled program management and administrative services,

assured the city stayed in compliance with federal regulations and more.

A representative of Ardurra said they have not just been there for disaster recovery but maintain what they consider a goodwill partnership in terms of answering the call whenever needed to benefit the city.

Their services are obviously not free. An amount

calculated by Ardurra shows every dollar spent on an Ardurra contract benefits the city by \$39.77.

Councilman Harold Doucet wondered if there would be cost savings, should the city take care of the grant writing on its own instead of paying the company to do the work.

But the city does not have a grant writer on staff.

City Manager Ron Burton said in the last budget council approved, his request for \$150,000 to seek out grant writing capabilities and one position was approved. Between 15 to 18 applications have been received for the position, he said.

But, Burton said, the process takes time and

See 'Contract,' page A8

PATHWAY TO SUCCESS



Mary Meaux/The News

Celebratory confetti drifts in the air during this week's Pathway to Success Luncheon in Port Arthur.

Elected leadership explains blueprint for career work

By Mary Meaux
mary.meaux@panews.com

Christian Manuel's rise to his position as Texas State Representative was made possible by education.

Manuel looked around the room

Thursday, where high school and college students as well as business and other leaders were seated for the annual Pathway to Success Luncheon, and asked the crowd to remember one thing.

"If it had not been for an educator in this room who didn't give up

on a dyslexic child, who did everything to survive... I wouldn't be a state representative," Manuel said. "I wouldn't have gotten the help I needed if I didn't have a principal who told me to stop goofing off. I

See 'Elected,' page A9

Port Neches purchases spot on Avenue from PNGISD

By Mary Meaux
mary.meaux@panews.com

PORT NECHES — A plot of land that is owned by the Port Neches-Groves Independent School District that sat vacant for years has a new owner and purpose.

Earlier this week trustees with the school district approved the sale of three lots — approximately 1.24 acres of land — at 1025 Port Neches Avenue.

The buyer of the property is the City of Port Neches.

City Manager Andre Wimer said the primary purpose of the city's property acquisition is to provide additional parking for Port Neches Avenue businesses and special events.

When asked how the sale of the property is beneficial to the district and the city, PNGISD Board President Brandon Cropper said he cannot speak on behalf of the city but believes the city has the community's best interest for the future growth and development of the area to draw more businesses and people to support the community.

The property has a long history and was once the home of First National Bank

See 'PNGISD,' page A9

Students learn importance of disaster management and careers

By Mary Meaux
mary.meaux@panews.com

A group of Tekoa High School students got a peek into the importance of emergency management, its ties to climate change and the related career paths.

Tekoa Alexander Gonzalez, who has 13 college credit hours and is part of the NextGen Guardians of the Gulf Coast program, told fellow students in attendance Wednesday at Port Arthur City Hall about the importance of bridging between emergency management and climate change at a young age.

"This is a path for careers. This is a path for development," Gonzalez said. "This is the path for where we can make an impact in our world for a positive end. This is about where we can help our communities, the communi-

ties that have helped us grow. We can help them by fighting causes of emergencies by trying to avoid emergencies that are caused by climate change."

Gonzalez said they, the youth, are the ones who need to take charge, "take the lantern, take the torch and lead our community in emergency management and climate change."

Jaimie Masterson, director of engagement for the Hazard Reduction Recovery Center at Texas A&M University, noted the frequency and intensity of disasters are increasing and are projected to increase in the future.

Growing up in Southeast Houston, she experienced flooding and knows the students and their parents locally have, as well.

The Hazard Reduction Recovery

See 'Guardians,' page A8



Mary Meaux/The News

Tekoa High School student Alexander Gonzalez speaks Wednesday to fellow students about job paths related to emergency management and the NextGen Guardians of the Gulf program at Port Arthur City Hall.

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