

AROUND THE CROSSROADS



DAILY POLL

Is it littering to throw a message in a bottle into the ocean?

To vote on this question, go to VictoriaAdvocate.com.

THURSDAY'S RESULTS

Have you taken a class at Victoria College's Academy of Lifelong Learning?

No.....94.1%

Yes.....5.9%

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Guest column: Pride and prejudice — Toxic episode at restaurant thankfully is not the norm

Read more at VictoriaAdvocate.com.

1,412 views as of 3:45 p.m. Thursday

CORRECTIONS

The Advocate wants to correct promptly any error in fact or clarify any misleading information we publish. To report any error or need for clarification, please call 361-574-1222.

BACK TO SCHOOL

Southside community coalition holding school supplies drive

BY IAN GRENIER
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Victoria's Southside Community Coalition is giving away hundreds of backpacks to kids in the area during its annual school supplies drive and giveaway.

The giveaway event will be from 4 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at 1107 S. Depot St. in Victoria.

The coalition is partnered with Driscoll Health and the city of Victoria in an effort to ensure kids have the supplies they need to do well in the upcoming school year, which starts on Aug. 9 for Victoria Independent School District schools.

"We just want to make sure that every kid has a backpack," Willet Dean, a coalition member, said.

Through their community partnerships, the coalition already has 200 backpacks to give away, Dean said, but they are also accepting donations to outfit even more Victoria kids. Donations of backpacks and other school supplies can be dropped off at the Victoria County Public Health Department at 2805 N. Navarro St.

The coalition will be accepting donations until Friday.

Although backpacks are the top-line item, the giveaway will also include supplies like pencils, pens, crayons, folders and earbuds, which are particularly important because the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS BY THE SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY COALITION

School supplies at last year's back-to-school event.



A flyer for the Southside Community Coalition's back-to-school event.

Victoria school district will be providing students with laptops starting this year. The giveaway event will also have music and

IF YOU GO

- **What:** Southside Community Coalition backpack and school supplies giveaway and entertainment
- **WHERE:** 1107 S. Depot St. in Victoria, which is by the old F.W. Gross High School
- **WHEN:** 4 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday
- **WANT TO HELP?:** The coalition is accepting donations until Friday at the county public health department building on Navarro Street.
- **MORE INFORMATION:** You can find more information and ask questions on the coalition's Facebook page at facebook.com/southsidevctx.

games for kids to enjoy, as well as booths from other organizations that provide important services to the community like Be Well Victoria, though the exact list of booths is still being ironed out.

Dean said she hopes giving kids backpacks and supplies can help them avoid the stigma and difficulties that come with

having old or inadequate supplies, particularly in "less cared for" areas of Victoria like the Southside. "Everybody deserves a chance for education, and sometimes they don't make an effort because they don't have it ... they're already going in with a negative attitude," she said about kids without the right resources.

GULF BEND CENTER



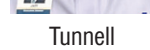
KYLE R. COTTON/KCOTTON@VICAD.COM

Jeff Tunnell, Gulf Bend Center executive director, shows the center's board the completed outpatient rehab room as part of a tour of the center's first floor renovations Tuesday.

Gulf Bend Center approves new base employee salary

BY KYLE R. COTTON
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Much like many other organizations around the country, Gulf Bend Center has been dealing with the "Great Resignation," as they have experienced job turnover from employees leaving the center.



Tunnell

However, with its board of directors approving its fiscal year 2023 budget Tuesday afternoon, the center has established a \$15 per hour base starting salary for all employees in hopes of making recruitment of new employees easier.

Over the last 12 months, the center has seen on average a 30% turnover in its staff, said Jeff Tunnell, Gulf Bend Center executive director.

This is the first time the center has set a base salary for recruitment, Tunnell said. In addition to the base salary, the 2023 budget includes merit-based raises of 3-5% and adjusting salaries for competitive and recruiting positions.

The center spends a lot of time on the challenges they face in retention and recruitment, he said. During exit interviews, employees said they enjoy the culture and people they work with but felt pay was lacking.

"Every program is going to be touched by this adjustment," Tunnell said. "It's going to add roughly \$800,000 in increased compensation."

He said the base salary is expected to cause a ripple effect throughout the organization. The change isn't

expected to be an end of salary adjustment, but it is a good start, he said.

"It costs us when we lose somebody, because it takes somebody to find them and getting them on board takes time," Tunnell said. "If we can save two or three or four staff into staying with these changes with this as motivation, then collectively we're on the right track."

In addition to these changes for the coming fiscal year, the center will be rewarding its employees with a one-time loyalty bonus from this fiscal year's lapsed salaries with bonuses ranging from \$500-1,500 depending on how long they've been with the center.

The bonuses are expected to be on employees' Aug. 5 checks and will cost an estimated total of \$117,000, according to the meeting agenda.

The center's board of directors approved a budget of \$14,337,233 for the next fiscal year, up from \$12,463,066 this year.

The board members also toured the completed phase 1 construction of Gulf Bend Center's first-floor renovation and the currently under construction phase 2 of renovations.

Renovated space is expected to bring better technology to help the center's clients, allow for more services such as ambulatory detox and provide additional space for the center's crisis teams and case managers, Tunnell said.

"It gives our staff the tools, a better environment, and in today's world everybody is remote," he said. "Access to providers who work remote will continue to provide access to services."

CRIME

Catalytic converters recovered, 2 men arrested after vehicle pursuit in Victoria

FROM A NEWS RELEASE

Two men were arrested Wednesday after a chase by police and three catalytic converters, believed to be stolen, were found in the car.

Additionally, a reciprocating saw was thrown from the pursued vehicle, according to a Victoria Police Department news release issued Thursday.

About 4:06 a.m., officers were dispatched to Toyota of Victoria, 5902 N. Navarro St., where the theft of catalytic converters was suspected.

When officers arrived, they saw a vehicle speeding off and began pursuing it. Victoria County sheriff's dep-

uties disabled the vehicle with a spike strip in the 17000 block of U.S. 59 after the saw was thrown from the vehicle.

Houston resident Joseph Segura, 23, who was a passenger, ran from the vehicle but was apprehended by an officer a short distance away.

The vehicle's driver, 23-year-old Christian Young, of Bacliff, and another passenger, who was not apprehended, also abandoned the vehicle.

Young and Segura were arrested on charges of engaging in organized criminal activity, tampering with or fabricating physical evidence, theft of motor vehicle parts, evading arrest or detention on foot and possession of marijuana less than 2 ounces.

Segura also was charged with possession of a criminal instrument. Young also was charged with evading arrest or detention with a vehicle.

Both were taken to the Victoria County Jail.

POLICE REPORTS

Driver who was found asleep at wheel with meth sentenced

ADVOCATE STAFF REPORT

A 28-year-old Alice man was sentenced to federal prison about a year after authorities discovered him asleep at the wheel with meth inside his vehicle.

Allen Marcus Carrillo pleaded guilty on May 2 and was sentenced to 10½ years in prison on Wednesday, according to a Department of Justice news release.

On May 17, 2021, authorities found Carrillo asleep in the driver's seat of a vehicle obstructing traffic on SH 359. The vehicle was still running at the time. A subsequent search discovered more than 90 grams of pure methamphetamine inside the vehicle.

According to federal authorities, Carrillo also attempted to bribe a guard at a federal detention facility after his arrest to acquire narcotics and contraband.

"Judge Tipton noted Carrillo's efforts to acquire contraband while in federal custody were 'extraordinary' and justified the lengthy sentence imposed," according to the news release.

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POSTMASTER: Change of Address notice should be sent to P.O. Box 1518, Victoria, Texas 77902-1518.

CASES BY COUNTIES

County	Total (+New)	Confirmed Cases	Probable Cases	Deaths (+New)	Vaccination Rates
Calhoun	6,295 (+10)	4,002	2,242	51	53.11%
DeWitt	6,926 (+8)	4,286	2,540	100	46.50%
Goliad	1,375 (+3)	887	456	32	43.24%
Jackson	3,510 (+4)	2,705	746	59	45.49%
Lavaca	4,603 (+6)	2,749	1,732	122 (+1)	44.66%
Matagorda	9,358 (+6)	7,430	1,751	177	48.53%
Refugio	1,995 (+1)	1,241	716	38	54.67%
Victoria	20,997 (+35)	18,217	2,367	413	50.57%
Wharton	10,390 (+18)	7,496	2,675	219	53.59%
9-County Total	65,449 (+91)	49,013	15,225	1,211 (+1)	48.93%

As of Wednesday, 27 adults with COVID-19 were hospitalized with 537 total staffed hospital beds in Trauma Service Area S, according to the state health department. Nine ICU beds were available, and five were occupied in the trauma service area, which includes Calhoun, DeWitt, Goliad, Jackson, Lavaca and Victoria counties. Hospitalization data is delayed by one day. For the sake of providing readers with a clearer understanding of the current state of COVID-19 in their communities we have added a new column to show active cases in our daily COVID-19 case counts.

The Victoria Advocate gathers all of its COVID-19 data from the Texas Department of State Health Services. Some data reported to the state is occasionally delayed, which can occasionally result in a large increase in new total cases when the cases are finally reported. When the Victoria Advocate reports "new total" cases, not all of those new cases are necessarily active cases, but rather that number reflects new cases added to the total number of cases reported in a county since the beginning of the pandemic. You can read more about how the state gathers its data here.

PHOTO CONTEST



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

We had a blast on vacation

ADVOCATE STAFF REPORT

Summer is almost over for families with school-aged children. We hope you were able to take a family vacation over the past couple of months.

For our newest reader-contributed photo contest we are looking for photos from your summer getaways with family,

friends or maybe just yourself. We want to see the places you visited — exotic or domestic.

Send your photos to victoriaadvocate.com/addphoto by 5 p.m. Aug. 19 for a chance to win a gift certificate to Charlene's Gifts in downtown Victoria. Be sure to tell us a little about where the photo was taken and who is in the photo.