

Growing Companies Choose to Remain in District

Headquarters Relocations, Expansions Point to Healthy Trend



Growth and Amenities: (Clockwise from top left) Saudi Basic Industries is expanding its presence at 2500 CityWest; Pape-Dawson Engineers' new common area at 10350 Richmond is bright and spacious; Costello, Inc. has two new employee kitchens at CityWest Place; the International Association of Drilling Contractors will move into this shell space at Lockton Place later this summer.

Recently, four businesses based in Westchase District either have relocated to new offices while remaining in the District or have expanded their existing footprint. Their decisions to stay in Westchase District are an encouraging show of confidence in the area and a validation of the efforts of the District to attract and retain world-class companies.

Costello Inc.

After 20-plus years at 9990 Richmond Avenue, **Costello, Inc.**, a preeminent civil engineering and surveying firm, moved its offices in April to 2107

CityWest Boulevard. The company, which has 150 Houston-based employees, expanded its office space to 35,000 square feet on two floors in the building. Dustin O'Neal, president of Costello, Inc., said the new space allows for more collaborative work spaces for current employees and provides room for growth.

The new offices feature multiple conference rooms as well as spacious kitchen and breakroom areas. Other employee amenities include a ping pong table, computer terminals dedicated to gaming and a 30-seat movie theater for employees to gather to screen their favorite films. "We work hard, but we also like to have

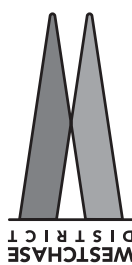
fun together," O'Neal said. "The greenspaces, gyms, onsite cafes and team sports offered on the campus allow our employees numerous opportunities to recharge and reenergize. All of these amenities help build stronger teams and increase employee creativity."

O'Neal said when considering moving Costello's headquarters, Westchase District's location and mobility were critical factors. "The geography of the area was just too central for us to ignore," he said. "When we mapped out where our employees are commuting from, it made sense to stay as close to our old headquarters as possible. We're in close proximity to both our

(Continued on Page 8)



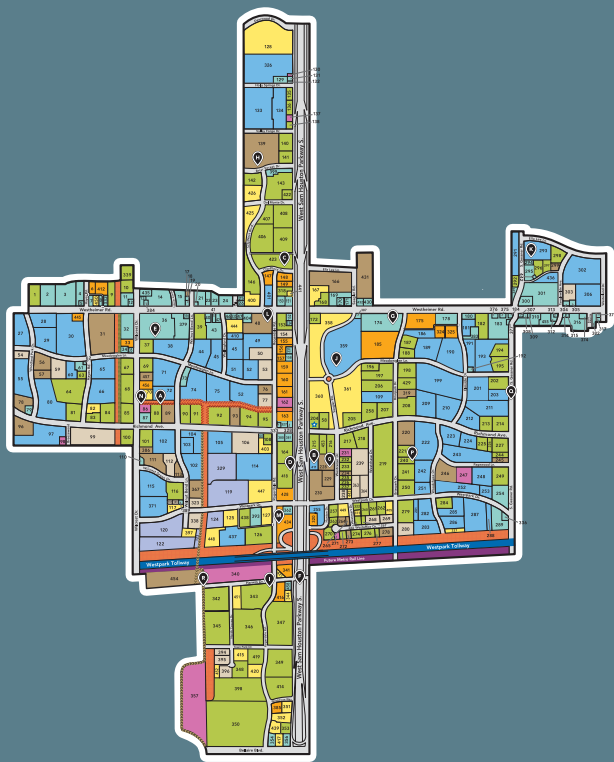
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WESTCHASE TODAY is published quarterly by Westchase District, a municipal management district funded by local property owners in a 4.2 square-mile area centered on the Sam Houston Tollway between I-10 and US-59 on the west side of Houston, Texas. We promote economic growth by enhancing mobility, beautification, public safety, planning and development of the District.



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The Dimensions of Westchase District

This issue of *Westchase Today* contains several articles that collectively portray the full range of Westchase District's dimensions. While we often talk about these different aspects, you can read these articles and get a pretty quick appreciation for what I mean by dimensions which are different ways to consider our mission, impact and benefits.

At the 30,000-foot view is the District's Board and governance. Westchase District's mission is to provide economic development in our community through a Board of Directors comprised of area property owners. The Board sets our mission, articulates our values and acts as the fiduciary for their peers.

We recently appointed two new members to the District's Board of Directors. Cindy Dahl is with Camden Property Trust and Chris Ball is with Parkway Properties. Cindy is profiled in this issue (*see below*) and represents multi-family interests while Chris represents Parkway, a major stakeholder in terms of office properties. The Board wants directors with a strong interest in Westchase District - both personally and professionally - and seeks to keep a balance of interests. Both Ms. Dahl and Mr. Ball will be outstanding directors.

Delving a bit deeper lets us look into the Westchase District's programs and projects carried out by the staff to achieve that mission. We've just unveiled a new public safety database (*see Page 7*) that will allow us to produce even better results, without having to spend more, by increasing efficiency and accountability. Public safety is a benefit that spans all land uses and stakeholder groups.

This issue also recaps the 2018 Corporate Challenge (*see Page 5*) which, in spite of a sluggish economy, had a record number of firms involved and raised \$20,000 for the Westchase District Community Fund. Fifty teams, 28 sponsors and event hosts, and dozens of volunteers raised funds to help youth in our community and provide training and networking for our local businesses.

The third program covered in this issue describes our work to provide public art



Westchase District Board Chair Philip Schneidau

(*see Page 4*). While art for its own sake is laudable, our focus is to provide economic benefits by making our district attractive, unique and anything but buttoned-down. We intend to compete and win every way, every day for residents, businesses and investors.

Results and the real estate market are the final dimension of measurement. One of the most compelling testimonials for our success occurs when firms relocate from one building to another and make it their goal to stay in Westchase District. It's called voting with their feet. Several local firms' internal relocations are covered (*see cover story*). Available space, rent levels, parking ratios and more vary among buildings and tenants choose what best suits them. But knowing that they decided to stay here and benefit from our services closes the loop and brings us back to the Board and our mission of economic development. Setting an environment that attracts businesses, encourages their growth and keeps them here is not easy. But the results make it all worthwhile.

A Civic-Minded Supervisor with Psychology Skills

District welcomes new Board member Cindy Dahl

With about 32,000 people living in 54 multifamily communities in Westchase District, the interests of area residents are a top priority. Recently the Westchase District Board of Directors added a member who represents one of the District's apartment community owners and who promises to share a fresh leadership perspective with the Board. Cindy Dahl brings more than two decades of experience in the multifamily world to her first board position, along with a background in psychology that has helped her relate to renters and real estate professionals alike.

Passionate about people

A native of San Antonio, Dahl graduated from Cypress Creek High School in Houston and worked a series of odd jobs before earning her bachelor's degree in psychology from Sam Houston State University. "I was the second member of my family to earn a college degree,

so when my mom suggested I look into the apartment industry, I thought she was crazy - it seemed like that had nothing to do with my studies. But you'd be surprised how much I've used my degree in interacting with people," she said. "As I've worked my way up, it's become my passion and now 24 years later, here I am."

As a district manager with Camden Property Trust, Dahl oversees five apartment communities, including Camden Park, located in Westchase District at 2700 Woodland Park Drive. "I support some amazing community managers. I've found that everyone at Camden is really passionate about their work. We've made Fortune's "100 best companies to work for" list 11 years in a row, so we must be doing something right."

A keen eye

In the time she's interacted with the District, Dahl said she's noticed big changes. "When I

Bread, Bunz, Cookies, Cake and Pie — Oh, My!

Local bakers bring goods to market from personal and professional kitchens

Since 2011, Texas has been one of the friendliest states in which to start a home-based baking business. That's when legislators passed a Texas cottage food law allowing business owners to sell homemade baked goods that do not require refrigeration, such as cakes, cookies, breads and pastries. The Westchase District Farmers Market features several such home-based bakers, as well as vendors who use commercial kitchens to prepare their goods.

Cottage businesses

When Rebecca Saunders and Jeff, her husband, decided to relocate to Texas from northern California last winter, one of the influencing factors for choosing Houston was Rebecca's ability to start a business from the home selling homemade sweet rolls. "I had researched farmers markets in the Houston area and because I'm able to bake small batches in my home, I can create new flavors to surprise my customers with in addition to my original cinnamon buns," she said. "Plus, baking is as therapeutic to me as working out, so it's great that I can do it from my home." Saunders' business **Homebunz** (homebunz.com) now attracts regular customers at the market. "It's really heartwarming to know that I now have fans who come every week," Saunders added.

Linda and Mary Haygood had considered a baking business for years, but had been daunted by the prospect of baking outside their home. "Once we retired, we looked into it again and discovered we could do it from home, which was perfect," Mary said. Now, as **Sweets and Treats by Two Sisters**, the Haygoods bake an average of about 400 iced cookies, brownies, lemon bars, cakes and muffins per week from their kitchen in West Houston. Other home-baked goods found at the farmers market include homemade baklava from **Sho Sho's Kitchen** (shoshokitchen.com).



Cottage Baking: Rebecca Saunders, owner of Homebunz, makes sweet rolls from her home in Spring, TX.



Bite-Size Business: Torrey McDonald, owner of Your Pie Man, makes his sweet potato and blueberry crumb pies from a commercial kitchen in the Heights.

Commerically prepared pies

While baking at home suits several vendors, others rent space in separate facilities. Since last November, Torrey McDonald, owner of **Your Pie Man** (yourpieman.com) has baked pies at a commercial kitchen in the Heights using his mother's world-famous recipes handed down from the family bakery in New Jersey. "My brother presented the recipes on the reality TV show *Shark Tank* in 2009, so we know they're special," he said. McDonald bakes between 100 to 500 pies each week, depending on demand. "Large pies are great for the holidays, but my specialty is

miniature pies, which are great for single-serve desserts," he said. "We procure the ingredients on Monday, prepare everything on Tuesday, bake on Wednesday and sell Thursday through Sunday."

Montana wheat, local control

Heidi Roark's dream of opening a bakery came true in 2012 when she invested in a **Great Harvest Bread Company** franchise in Katy, TX (greatharvestkatytx.com). "Since I had never baked commercially, it made sense to partner with a brand that could provide a marketing platform and a template for how to run a business," she said. Soon Heidi's parents Dana and Diane retired from their careers to help her run the store and the family branched out to selling at area farmers markets, including the Westchase District Farmers Market.

While Great Harvest Bread Company is a franchise with more than 200 bakeries and cafés across the United States, each location is given the latitude to customize everything from the store's layout and design to what



Rising Early: (From left) Diane, Heidi and Dana Roark begin baking bread at 4:30 a.m. daily at their Great Harvest Bread Co. location in Katy, TX.

products it sells, based on seasonality and customer feedback. "Great Harvest supplies our wheat, which comes from Montana and is tested for protein content, moisture level, baking qualities and taste," Heidi said. "Other than that, we get all of our other ingredients - such as white flour, oats, raisins, meats, etc. - from local distributors. We also resell some local honey and jams from vendors in Katy."

The Roarks start baking at 4:30 a.m. milling their wheat onsite every day using only fresh ingredients with no preservatives. "It's true farm-to-table bread," Diane said. "We use everything within 48 hours so that the bread still has all of the live nutrients in it. We're not pulling any of our products from the freezer."

Caring artisans

What all these vendors have in common is that they are making their products from scratch using fresh, natural ingredients with no preservatives. "I'm less concerned about where they bake and more focused on how they bake," said farmers market manager John Carey. "The care they put into their products is what makes them worthy of featuring at our market."

Westchase District Farmers Market

Year-round, rain or shine, Thursdays @ 3 p.m.

St. Cyril of Alexandria Catholic Church

10503 Westheimer Road (at Rogerdale Road, one block west of Beltway 8)

www.westchasedistrictfarmersmarket.com

first came on board with Camden, I knew a little about Westchase District, but I wanted to embrace it more, so I found myself attending the District's public safety alliance meetings and connecting with other apartment community managers," she said. "What I've really noticed is the enhancements in the shopping centers where owners renovated the faces of the stores and brought in quality restaurants which attract a nicer clientele."

Dahl said she's also noticed a change in the demographic of homelessness. "There seems to be a lot fewer homeless people in the area, which makes our residents feel safer," she said. "The beautification of the area with signage and landscaping also really stands out to me. It's been exciting to see the area evolving."

Rackets and relatives

An avid tennis player, Dahl enjoys working out and "tinkering in the kitchen," creating new recipes for her family to sample. Dahl has three siblings and an extended family that includes more than 100 cousins and 16 nieces and nephews. "William, my husband, and I don't have any children, but I love being the cool aunt," she said, laughing. "It's great to spoil the heck out of them, enjoy them and then hand them back to their parents."

An active member of her church, Dahl said she loves working with the senior community, having previously volunteered at a nursing home. "I'm a hard worker," she added. "If I say I'm going to do something then I'm going to do it times ten."

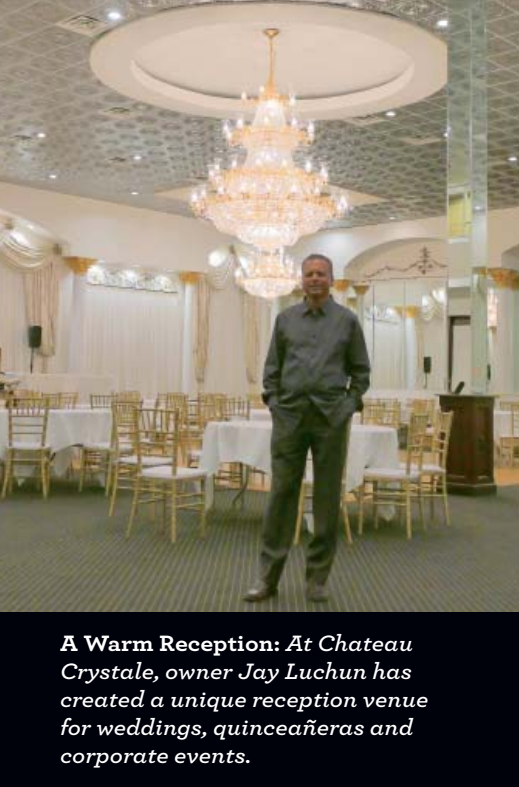


Fresh Face: Cindy Dahl, district manager with Camden Property Trust, recently joined the Westchase District Board of Directors.

Cultivating the Finer Side of Westchase District

Chateau Crystale owner Jay Luchun keeps it classy

Tucked behind the Woodlake Square shopping center at the corner of Westheimer and Gessner stands Chateau Crystale, one of Houston's most luxurious event spaces. Over time, owner Jay Luchun has acquired adjacent properties, including the strip center that's home to the famous Rudi Lechner's German Restaurant. Over a traditional German meal of veal schnitzel and black forest cake, Luchun recently reflected on his time in Westchase District and shared his hopes for the future.



A Warm Reception: At Chateau Crystale, owner Jay Luchun has created a unique reception venue for weddings, quinceañeras and corporate events.

Dream events

A native of the East African island nation of Mauritius, Luchun travelled the world via careers in the hospitality and gaming industries before purchasing Chateau Crystale in 2004. "I didn't have enough pocket change to purchase a hotel, but I knew about events and event centers," he said. "The property had been a sports bar and then a wedding hall, but I had a grander vision. I had worked in some of the 'who's who' places in Paris, New York and Las Vegas and wanted to create a premier venue that could help people realize the events of their dreams."

The 16,500 square-foot building houses a 9,000 square-foot ballroom that seats 500 and a 3,300 square-foot hall that seats 175. "About 60 percent of our business is weddings, 20 percent is quinceañeras and another 20 percent is corporate events," he

said. Each October, Chateau Crystale hosts Zest in the West, the annual gourmet food and wine tasting event, hosted by the Houston West Chamber of Commerce.

Luchun oversees a staff of about 20 who handle everything between greeting customers to handwriting thank you notes. "Our staff members really take their time getting to know our customers and understanding what they want out of their events," he said. "As a result, most of our business comes by word of mouth referrals from satisfied clients. I don't advertise - I don't need to." Luchun said the calendar for Chateau Crystale is mostly booked through the end of the year.

Corner expansion

When renowned restaurateur Rudi Lechner retired a few years ago, Luchun purchased the popular German restaurant bearing Lechner's name. "I made sure not to change anything about Rudi's, from the menu to the staff and especially the name," he said. "Many of the restaurant's loyal workers have been there for twenty years or

more," he said. "I feel a responsibility to keep them employed."

Luchun also purchased a nearby office building at 2537 South Gessner, expanding his presence at one of the busiest intersections in Houston. "I like my location in Westchase District," he said. "It's centrally located and yet we're hidden just a bit from the traffic on Westheimer. We're accessible yet somewhat private."

Hotel hopes

Looking forward, Luchun said a long-term dream of his is to build a 100-room hotel and a structured parking garage somewhere on his property that would complement Chateau Crystale. "I haven't worked out the design yet of where exactly it will go, but if we end up razing the strip center, I'll put Rudi Lechner's on the rooftop of the hotel," he said. "I'll make sure that people still will be able to find it."

Chateau Crystale

2517 South Gessner Road • 713-532-4070 • chateaucrystale.com



Tucked Away: Chateau Crystale sits behind the Woodlake Square Shopping Center at the northeast corner of Westheimer and Gessner.

A Really Big Thank You

Massive mural along trail pays tribute to heroes of Hurricane Harvey

Another public art installation is taking place this summer in Westchase District and will be the District's largest piece to date: a 100-foot wide by 20-foot tall mural designed as a tribute to Hurricane Harvey rescuers.

Flood channel canvas

The mural will be located on a concrete slope where the Brays Bayou Connector Trail intersects with the Wilcrest Connector Trail, just north of the Westpark Tollway. The trail follows along a Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) channel, creating a thematic tie for the mural's subject.

"About a year ago, we discussed painting a mural at this location but hadn't decided on a theme," said Louis Jullien, Westchase District's projects director. "In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey and upon hearing about the many stories of heroic rescues during the catastrophe, we thought it would be appropriate to create a mural that recognized and thanked the citizens who selflessly came to the aid of others."

The District has an agreement with HCFCD that allows it to paint on concrete portions of the channel, though the District must submit designs for content approval. "The folks over at flood control loved the idea and felt it was a clever way to show appreciation," Jullien said. "I think the mural will serve as a reminder of the best qualities in people that can come out during a disaster like Harvey."

The MacGyver of mural artists

The man tasked with creating the mural is Larry Crawford, the same artist who has painted ten "muralitos" on traffic signal control boxes throughout Westchase District. Jullien compared Crawford to the television character MacGyver - who is famous for solving problems with the inventive, improvised use of common items - because of Crawford's ability to access the site despite its difficult-to-reach location.



All About That Base: Mural artist Larry Crawford lays down the color foundation for what will become a giant mural along a concrete slope along the District's Brays Bayou Connector Trail.

"Working in the Houston heat while pestered by mosquitoes, he somehow figures out the dimensions of the mural's elements so that they're in proportion. I'm amazed by what he can do," Jullien said.

Crawford said that next to getting to the site, his greatest challenge with this project is getting the scaling and perspective right, since the mural is so large and on an angle. "I can't project this on a wall like I would other murals and I can't just freehand it," he said. "I have to use large paper patterns that allow me to basically trace my characters and details so that they're proportional."

Crawford estimates that he'll use about 10 gallons of paint for primer, about 30 gallons for base colors, another 10 gallons for foreground elements and about 15 gallons of clear coat on top of the finished image as a protectant against sunlight and graffiti. His preferred paint? "I use Behr Premium Plus outdoor exterior paint from Home Depot," he said. "It stands up to the weather really well and I know that the image needs to be able to take some abuse."

Paul Revere Middle School upsets Costello, Inc. at Corporate Challenge

21st annual event generates fun for participants, cash for charities

A team from Paul Revere Middle School ended a seven-year dynasty previously held by Costello Engineering, Inc. and claimed the coveted traveling trophy as the overall winner of Westchase District's 21st annual Corporate Challenge. The Paul Revere Patriots, led by Johnny Davis, earned top honors, while Costello's "navy" team, led by Brent Palermo, came in second. Third place in the six-event competition went to Van De Wiele & Vogler, Inc., led by Darren Brown.

Fifty teams competed this year, including new participants from DBR Engineering Consultants and The Goodman Corporation. Each team participated in six different athletic events - NBA Around the World, kickball, briefcase relay, soccer kick, dodgeball and crack the code.

The winners in the individual events were:

- NBA Around the World: Amegy Bank**
- Kickball: Paul Revere Middle School**
- Briefcase Relay: Paul Revere Middle School**
- Soccer Kick: Paul Revere Middle School**
- Dodgeball: Tailored Brands**
- Crack the Code: Amegy Bank**

Summer camp and charitable support

The awards were presented at an April 25 luncheon, which also recognized title sponsor Frost Bank as well as major sponsors of the 21st annual event: Amegy Bank; Camden; Camp Gladiator; Cantina Laredo; D.E. Harvey Builders; The Goodman Corporation; Houston Marriott Westchase; Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam, Inc.; Kuo & Associates; Olympus Property; Pape-Dawson Engineers; Parkway Properties; Playworks; Premier America Credit Union; PS LIGHTWAVE; Quillian Center; Raba Kistner, Inc.; Residences 2727; and Westchase Auto Repair Center.

Since 1998, Westchase District's Corporate Challenge has raised more than \$263,000 for area charities, including Quillian Center's summer day camps. The money is distributed by the Westchase District Community fund, the nonprofit arm of the District. WDCF Chairman Tim Johnson presented a \$10,100 check to Quillian Center at the award lunch. The money is used by Quillian to provide need-based scholarships for area children to attend Quillian Center's summer day camps.

"We're grateful for our long-time relationship with Westchase District and the Corporate Challenge," said Tom Gaden, Quillian Center Director. "And we appreciate all the area businesses that participate in this event and help generate the contributions that will convey directly to area kids."



New Champions: The Patriots from Paul Revere Middle School won First Place Overall in the 21st Annual Westchase District Corporate Challenge.



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A Community Resource Reborn

Judson W. Robinson, Jr. Westchase Neighborhood Library reopens with new features, services

A fashion show, origami classes and a Chinese lion dance were all part of the recent grand reopening celebration of the Judson W. Robinson, Jr. Westchase Neighborhood Library, located at 3223 Wilcrest Drive. After being closed since September 2016 for extensive renovations, the library is back and better than ever, offering the latest technology, helpful staff and a state-of-the-art gathering space for community events and exhibits.

Rich history

The library first opened in 1991 and is named for Judson W. Robinson Jr., who in 1971 became the first African-American elected to the Houston City Council and served twice as mayor pro tempore. "When he died in 1990 after serving nine terms, my mother served as an interim city council member and then I served on city council from 1992 to 1997," said Judson W. Robinson, III, who was in attendance at the library's reopening. "To my knowledge, we were the first and only father-mother-son family to serve on Houston City Council. We're thankful to see history being preserved and respected at the library. This is a big deal for our family and I know my father would be proud of this facility."

Let there be light

While the footprint and basic structure of the 16,500 square-foot building was preserved, about 70 percent of the building's exterior was replaced said Ken Black, associate principal and senior project manager with Page Southerland

Page, the architecture firm that redesigned the library. "We totally reconfigured how the library was arranged. We wanted to create multiple flex-use spaces for various gatherings and performances."

Black said the new library features about 50 percent more exterior glazing than the previous building design, along with a raised roof with clear story glazing to

create a friendly, open environment. Automated window shades help keep visitors cool and protect them from glare. "It's a bright space in which to read

and the library offers great views of the nearby trail and of what will become the new park on Wilcrest Drive. Another goal was to invite the public into the facility. Therefore, we used 25 feet-high glazing as the entry portal from Wilcrest Drive," said Black.

Resources and relationships

Upon entering the library, it's immediately apparent that the space is about more than just books. An art exhibit greets visitors, inviting them to stroll and explore before heading to the information desk. "Not only do we have an expansive collection of books, CDs and DVDs that can be checked out, but we also have an electronic library that provides digital access to thousands of digital and online resources," said Tim Siegel, the library's manager. "We offer children's story times as well as computer classes and online tutoring for both children and adults."

Siegel said that a new teen study room provides a dedicated after-school zone with homework help available. An adult reading room offers a quiet space to browse books. A new multi-purpose meeting room with audiovisual equipment seats up to 100 people. Express self-checkout machines make checking out books and paying fines speedy transactions. Library members also can borrow tablet computers and laptops while at the library by scanning their library cards. More than two dozen desktop computers are available for children, teens and adults. "We're eager to cultivate a relationship, so please reach out to us," Siegel said.

The library is now open on: Mondays from noon to 8 p.m.; Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Light and Bright: Designers raised the ceiling and added more windows to increase the amount of natural light entering the Robinson-Westchase Neighborhood Library.



A Legacy of Literacy: Judson W. Robinson, III - son of the library's namesake (center) - and Cora, his wife, attended the library's grand reopening, along with their grandchildren Kingston (far left) and Farah, and with Rhea Lawson, Houston Public Library executive director (far right).

Judson Robinson, Jr. Westchase Neighborhood Library

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A Steady Eddie...Um, Make That Andy

Officer Andy Sepulveda Jr.'s presence is a District fixture

For the past 12 years, Houston Police Department Officer Andy Sepulveda, Jr. has been a steady presence on the Westchase District Patrol. One of the longest continuously serving officers, he has logged thousands of hours on the clock for the District and has put tens of thousands of miles on various patrol vehicles. His familiar face is often seen around the area talking with apartment community managers and business owners. Long hours and unpredictable days are all just part of the job for the man who simply describes himself as a “family provider.”

Boatswain's mate to beat cop

Sepulveda grew up in Victoria, Texas as the oldest of three children. A graduate of Sharpstown High School, he shipped out to boot camp in the U.S. Navy on his birthday in 1987, going on to serve four years as an aviation boatswain's mate, in charge of aircraft on the hangar bay of an aircraft carrier. It was during his time in service that he learned from his father, an officer with the Houston Police Department, that HPD was hiring. “On ships I worked as a fire fighter and I considered a career in that, but my father nudged me in the direction of the police.”

After graduating from the Houston Police Academy in 1993, Sepulveda was assigned to Central Patrol, then transferred to Westside Patrol where he has been a patrol officer for 24 years. “I had the opportunity to work with my father for about 10 years,” he said. “We weren't allowed to ride together, but we both worked patrol and shared information about various situations.” Sepulveda Sr., a 21-year veteran with HPD, passed away in 2016. “It was an honor to work alongside him and was one of the highlights of my career,” he added.

Long hours and listening

When he learned that Westchase District was hiring officers, Sepulveda interviewed and joined the Westchase Patrol in 2006. “At first I was working just two days a week for the District, then for a while I was working five days a week in addition to my normal duties. As I got older, I switched back to just

two days a week,” he said, chuckling.

Proactively checking parking lots, Sepulveda spends some of his time talking with owners of convenience stores and restaurants, listening to and addressing their concerns. “Sometimes they have suggestions about what we can do to make their property more secure and I'm all for that,” he said.

Fierce loyalty and fishing lures

So what's kept Sepulveda coming back year after year to work for Westchase District? “I have a lot of respect for and loyalty to Don McKinney,” he said, referring to the District's public safety vice president and retired HPD assistant chief. “I knew him as a lieutenant and later when he became an assistant chief,” he said. “He's been a patrolman himself, so he knows what we officers deal with. Anytime you have a leader like that, you're going to be really loyal.”

A resident in Sugar Land, Texas, Sepulveda has been married for 20 years and is a father of four, including a set of twins. When not on duty he enjoys spending time outdoors, “You know, just fishing and hanging out at the beach,” he said.



Cleaning Up the Area: Mario Pineda (left), manager at Mister Car Wash, 10440 Richmond Avenue, periodically calls on Officer Andy Sepulveda to approach freeloaders or vagrants at his business.

Public Safety through the Lens of Big Data

New crime database arms Westchase District Patrol with analytical tools

The enormous volume of digital data created daily is used to customize everything in our lives from our entertainment and shopping experiences to health services and even our safety. Processing, analyzing and then putting to use all of this big data can change our lives today as well as influence the near future. Westchase District is harnessing crime data collected by the Houston Police Department to identify “hot spots” within the District and allocate resources to efficiently and effectively combat criminal activity.

Monthly dump

Since last November, Don McKinney, Westchase District's vice president of public safety, has managed a unique database that receives crime statistics

updated monthly from HPD's Westside and Midwest divisions. “Thanks to our great working relationship with HPD, we're able to acquire a data set that's exclusively within Westchase District's boundaries,” he said. “We have so many different ways we can access this information and sort it. We can drill down on the data by property number, by address, type of crime, date range and more. This allows us to see where the crime is happening, where the trends are. Then we can compare one apartment property to another, or compare shopping centers to one another. It's a really robust system.”

The information comes directly from the Houston Police Department's Crime Database that HPD collects whenever they run calls for service. “None of this data is classified, it's all public information, but it would be nearly impossible for a private citizen to request from the police every month, much less be able to make sense of it. Heck, without this database software, I doubt I could make sense of it,” McKinney said, laughing.

Results and resources

Already, McKinney and the Westchase District Patrol officers have put the data into practice. “We've placed mobile cameras at two separate locations where we noticed there were increased amounts of burglaries of motor vehicles,” he said. “When we got the latest month's data, we saw that incidents at one location had dropped to zero. That's a direct result of using this data.”

McKinney said the database also is a great resource for him when speaking with property owners about crime in the District or perceptions about it. “It helps whenever I'm called to speak at any sort of event where people may have questions about what kind of crime is at their location,” he said. “I can run addresses at the office before I leave and see what kind of problems, if any, they are having.”

Raw numbers often clear up differing opinions about criminal activity in the District. “Sometimes people will tell me they think that crime is either high or on the rise,” McKinney said. “Now I'm able to give objective, factual information about their perceptions, as it may be that we're working with a perception issue rather than an actual crime issue.”

Unique in Houston

McKinney said that to his knowledge, there are no other management districts in Houston with this level of analysis. “They may receive reports, but they're much more static and the data can't be searched and manipulated like ours,” he said. “We're able to create maps, tables and trend lines as we want. It's really quite remarkable.”



Crunching the Numbers: Don McKinney, Westchase District's vice president of public safety (left), monitors crime stats with officer John Reyes using the District's new crime database.

(Continued from Page 1)

competitors and clients alike. The area looks nice and everyone feels safe. Plus, the quality of the office space is just phenomenal.”

Pape-Dawson

For the past eight years, **Pape-Dawson Engineers** occupied 12,500 square feet at 10333 Richmond. In March, the firm moved across the street into 16,210 square feet on the second floor of 10350 Richmond Avenue, with plans to occupy the entire floor later this year. With 72 employees currently, nearly doubling the company’s office size allows for Pape-Dawson to expand to as many as 100 employees in the new space, according to Michael Preiss, senior vice president with Pape-Dawson.

“We do work in Harris, Fort Bend, Waller, Montgomery, Chambers, Liberty, Brazoria and Galveston counties and for us the epicenter of all that is right here in Westchase District,” Preiss said. “When you look at a scatter graph of where our clients are and where our employees live, the District’s accessibility to and from major freeways just hits the sweet spot for us – it’s a great balance for us.”

Preiss said while the company has kept its basic layout of individual offices around the perimeter of the floor with semi-private, flexible workstations in the center, Ziegler Cooper Architects – who handled the floor’s interior design – focused on getting as much natural light as deep into the space as possible. “We want to keep employees’ energy levels up, so we’ve also upgraded to electronic sit-to-stand desks for all of our offices and workstations,” he said. “We’ve enjoyed the amenities in the District for years and now having the opportunity to upgrade our facilities gives us the elbow room to continue to expand.”

SABIC

Saudi Basic Industries Corp., also known as SABIC, will bring about 200 jobs to Houston for a total of about 600 employees, most of which will be located at 2500

CityWest Boulevard by the end of the year. The company has said it is creating an additional 70 positions at its Westchase District headquarters to support the company’s growing supply chain operations. SABIC has leased additional space to accommodate the growth and renovations should be complete this summer.

“SABIC named the greater Houston area as its Americas Region Hub in 2015. Since then, many of our employees have transitioned here from around the country and started working at CityWest,” said Shelia Naab with SABIC corporate affairs. “The building offers a great corporate environment that is centrally located and is close to shops and restaurants. I think CityWest has helped everyone feel welcome in Houston.”

“We’re in close proximity to both our competitors and clients alike. The area looks nice and everyone feels safe. Plus, the quality of the office space is just phenomenal.”
- Dustin O’Neal, president, Costello, Inc.

IADC

In July, the **International Association of Drilling Contractors** will relocate its headquarters in Westchase District from 10370 Richmond to Lockton Place, the District’s newest office building located at 3657 Briarpark Drive. The 18,920 square-foot lease brings the 186,000 square-foot office building to 93.5 percent leased.

“Not only is IADC’s lease a beacon of light to the Westchase submarket, it underscores the ‘flight to quality’ theme continuing to play out across the city’s office sector,” said Russell Hodges, senior vice president with JLL, the firm representing Lockton Place.

“We were looking for a new space to energize our employees’ experience and further provide excellent service to our members,” Jason McFarland, IADC president. “The amenities and design of Lockton Place support connection and collaboration, which are key tenets of IADC’s culture. Our new headquarters sets the stage for the start of another chapter of growth and innovation for the association.”

“These companies’ decisions to remain in Westchase District speak to their appreciation of the superior amenities the area offers,” said Dave Gilkeson, Westchase District’s chief operating officer and vice president. “We’re thrilled that they’ve chosen to grow with us.”

Neighborhood News

Westchase District recently purchased two new **Fuji Nevada bicycles** for its bike patrol officers. The bikes feature 29-inch tires and are lighter than the previous models used, which were at least seven years old. “They have a higher grade of shock absorbency, the gears are smoother and they provide a better overall ride,” said officer Marlon Stevens (pictured below, left, with officer Deandre Hutcheson). “Those features make a big difference when you’re riding for six hours at a stretch!”

The feature the officers are most excited about? “We now have kickstands!” Hutcheson said. “Before we had to lean the bikes against things or lay them on the ground. Now we can mount and dismount easier and keep the bikes upright when we’re not on them.”

Look for our bike patrol officers on our trail network as well as in retail and apartment community parking lots and be sure to say hello (and check out their new bikes!).



Westchase District updated some of its public safety signage, tweaking the message of the “**Lock, Take, Hide**” signs frequently seen in parking lots and garages throughout the District.

“I’m not a big fan of the ‘hide’ part of that message,” said Don McKinney,

Westchase District’s public safety vice president. “The surest way to prevent thieves from stealing your personal property is to take it with you. If they suspect that there’s something they want inside your vehicle, they will find a way to break in and take it. Don’t become a victim by leaving your valuables behind. And – though it seems like common sense, it bears repeating – always lock your vehicle.”

McKinney said the signs, will be phased in on an as-needed replacement basis. If you are interested in purchasing these signs at cost for your property, contact McKinney at 713-780-9434.

For the second year in a row, **Capital Farm Credit**, has awarded the Westchase District Farmers Market with a \$1,000 grant. Capital Farm Credit awarded 29 grants in 2018 totaling \$29,500 to farmers markets across the state. The grant will help fund activities for the market’s Farm-tastic Summer Series for Kids, which will take place on the third Thursdays at the market in June, July and August.

“Many consumers today have little appreciation for the hard work it takes to put food on our tables,” said Jay Stewart, chief lending officer for Capital Farm Credit.

“Local farmers markets provide an opportunity to connect and help tell that story. We established the farmers’ market grant program to provide these local markets with additional resources they need to support local farmers.”



TAKE

your valuables
and

LOCK

your vehicle.



**A reminder from the
Westchase District Patrol**