

County to back probe with \$2.5M

Funds involve local investigation of man’s killing last month by immigration officers

By John Lomax V and Julián Aguilar
STAFF WRITERS

Harris County commissioners voted unanimously Thursday to dedicate \$2.5 million over the next three years to support a local investigation into the killing of Lorenzo Salgado Araujo by federal immigration officers in Magnolia Park last month. The rare decision to allocate

funds to a single investigation is arguably the most concrete step local officials have taken in response to the July 7 shooting, which sparked weeks of protests, demands for independent probes of the incident and criticism of federal authorities’ lack of cooperation with local investigators, who warned that any criminal case could become a lengthy legal battle. Commissioner Rodney Ellis,

who first floated the idea in the weeks after the killing, said the money will fund labor, overtime, a private attorney and software upgrades to aid District Attorney Sean Teare’s work. Teare said the money will be used solely to support the investigation and will be returned should investigators decide they are unable to move forward with the case. It’s unusual for the county to set aside funding exclusively for a single investigation, but Teare said federal officials had forced

Shooting continues on A3



Courtesy of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas

A procession and prayer vigil honors Lorenzo Salgado Araujo, who was killed last month in Houston.

PICTURE PERFECT RETURN



Newly reacquired defensive end Jadeveon Clowney takes photos with fans after the Texans’ training camp practice on Wednesday at Houston Methodist Training Center. Clowney, a former No. 1 overall draft pick for the Texans who played last season for the Dallas Cowboys, re-signed with the Texans on Sunday. **Coverage, C1**

BRETT COOMER/HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Committee votes to hold Fauci in contempt

By Eric Tucker
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A Senate committee voted along party lines Thursday to hold Dr. Anthony Fauci in contempt of Congress over his refusal to answer questions at a hearing on his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, setting up a referral to the Justice Department for potential investigation over whether the country’s longtime top infectious disease official properly exercised his constitutional rights.

A department spokesperson confirmed Thursday evening that the department had received the contempt referral, is “reviewing it and will work with the Senate accordingly.” The vote approving the contempt resolution came a week after Fauci invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination more than 100 times when he appeared before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, an episode that raised fresh legal questions about the

ability of Congress to compel testimony from a previously pardoned witness. Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, the committee chairman who pressed for the contempt finding, said that constitutional protection did not apply because Fauci last year received a pardon from President Joe Biden and thus did not have to worry about the threat of prosecution. “Dr. Fauci faced no risk of federal prosecution,” Paul said at the outset of Thursday’s vote.

“All he had to do was tell the truth.” He told colleagues that the issue before them was not Fauci’s opinions, policies or “anything he said from a podium six years ago.” Instead, he added, “We were voting on whether a witness who has received the benefit of a sweeping federal pardon can be ordered by this committee to answer questions and then defy that order without consequence.” **Fauci continues on A5**

SpaceX, Tesla to build big chipmaking plant

By Andrea Leinfelder
STAFF WRITER

SpaceX and Tesla are building a massive \$16.8 billion chip-making facility outside of College Station in Grimes County, both companies confirmed on Thursday. SpaceX has been working on this deal for months and has already negotiated tens of millions of dollars in incentives with Grimes County, local school districts and the state for the advanced semiconductor facility, called Terafab. The facility is expected to span 100 million square feet and employ more than 3,000 people. The initial phase of develop-

ment is expected to cost \$16.8 billion, SpaceX said Thursday, lower than the company’s prior estimates of \$55 billion. Terafab will build chips for self-driving vehicles, humanoid robots and space-based data centers, according to the company’s update. Both SpaceX and Tesla are based in Texas. “We’re now embarking on the most epic chip-building effort,” Elon Musk, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, said in a statement. “The Terafab is bringing cutting-edge manufacturing to America, creating thousands of high-paying jobs in the Lone Star State and enabling us to produce AI chips at scale for use on Earth and in

Plant continues on A6



Jay Janner/Austin American-Statesman

A demolished power plant in Grimes County is part of the approximate location of a proposed Terafab facility.

Miles defends special ed overhaul

HISD chief lists effort among priorities at teachers convocation

By Nusaiba Mizan
STAFF WRITER

State-appointed Superintendent Mike Miles defended Houston ISD’s controversial overhaul of special education Wednesday, arguing the changes will better serve students with disabilities as the district faces scrutiny from parents, federal officials and state administrators. Miles made the remarks while welcoming teachers to the new 2026-27 school year at the district’s annual convocation. Miles shared his own experience as a child with a speech impediment in remarks that stretched nearly an hour, explaining his reasoning for the special education changes as well as other key priorities. The Texas Education Agency recently ordered HISD to pause the overhaul until the district reviews thousands of students’ individualized education programs. The changes are also the subject of a federal civil rights investigation. “I couldn’t be understood when I was 5 or 6 years old. I had

HISD continues on A3

UTMB receives \$180M for heart care

By Evan MacDonald
STAFF WRITER

The Sealy & Smith Foundation is donating another \$130 million to the University of Texas Medical Branch to cap off a record-setting contribution to the university’s new hub for cardiovascular treatment and research. The donation, announced Thursday, will fund efforts to fight heart disease, the leading cause of death in the U.S. The gift comes after the foundation gave \$50 million to UTMB over the past year to establish the Sealy Heart & Vascular Institute and what will now be known as the Sealy Department of Cardiovascular Medicine. The combined \$180 million represents the largest gift in UTMB history and the largest the foundation has ever given, the university said in a news release. The foundation decided to provide more funding for the in-

UTMB continues on A6