

## Victoria city manager details plans for Victoria 2022

by Peter Moralez

Speaking with Jesus Garza, City Manager for the city of Victoria, it is his goal to improve city services for all Victorians by taking advantage of what we have available to us and adding to it. “We need to be as cost efficient as possible by taking what’s available to us, by picking the low hanging fruit,” he said.

The key elements according to Garza are improving our infrastructure, offering more and better services throughout Victoria’s Park system, working to improve downtown Victoria and continuing to develop the city charter.

The Victoria City budget for fiscal 2022 is 171 million dollars. The city has a five-year Capitol Improvement Plan (CIP) that was established to further the city’s commitment to the citizens of Victoria. The purpose of the CIP is to forecast and match projected revenues with major capitol needs over a five –year period.

“The CIP is a very important

tool in our tool belt that matches long-term improvements with projected city revenues, which in the long run serves the citizens of Victoria,” Garza said.

Of the 2022 annual budget eighteen million is earmarked for infrastructure on city streets. “One of the key elements with regards to street repair is not what the public sees, but in fact, what they don’t necessarily see, the type of work that goes on below street level,” he said. “To do repairs and improvements on our streets it’s essential that we do pipe repair below street level and this type of repair extends the length of time needed overall to complete the tasks at hand.”

The medians being installed by the Texas Department of Transportation on both Navarro Street and Houston Highway came up in the conversation. “Even though there are inevitable growing pains and adjustments to driving habits I feel, in the long run that these

See CITY, pg. 14



2022 City of Victoria mayor and city council members. *Contributed photo.*

## Students win scholarships in Black History poster contest

The first, second, and third-place winners of the Black History Month Poster Contest display their posters and awards Tuesday during a reception to honor the students who participated in the annual contest.

The theme of this year’s contest was “Black Olympians,” and students from De Leon Elementary School in the Victoria Independent

School District submitted posters that highlighted famous athletes ranging from Carl Lewis to LeBron James.

The annual contest is a partnership between the University of Houston-Victoria, Victoria College and the Victoria Black History Committee Inc., and is open to all fifth graders in Victoria.

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Shown from left are VC President Jennifer Kent; first-place winner Zyion Jackson, 10; second-place winner Kimberly DelaGarza, 11; third-place winner Camila Luna, 11; and UHV President Bob Glenn. *Contributed photo.*

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# Social services offered at the Food Bank

by Meridith Byrd, Director of Community Engagement

Did you know that the Food Bank of the Golden Crescent does more than simply collaborate with community partners to provide food? A key component of the Food Bank's outreach is to be mobile in the communities we

serve, letting residents know of assistance and services available to them, and helping them access those services. Our Social Services department is available to families most in need of social, economic, and community resources.

## Why does the Food Bank have a Social Services Department?

Hurricane Harvey and COVID-19 have created exceptional hardships for families beyond their control and affecting their income, employment, medical services, and access to food. Ersilia Garcia and Jesse Olivarez are Referral Specialists and Case Navigators, certified and trained to help people fill out the online application for benefits. They can also answer questions about the application process, residency, and income requirements, and find community partnerships to assist with housing and other needs.

## How does the Social Services Department help people?

The Case Navigators help people apply for SNAP (formerly Food Stamps), Medicaid and Medicaid Perinatal, Medicare Savings



Jesse Olivarez. Contributed photo.



Ersilia Garcia. Contributed photo.

Program, CHIP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Healthy Texas Women. These programs are only available to Texas residents and require proof such as a driver's license or state I.D., social security card, or birth certificate, as well as a current utility bill (electric, gas, rental agreement, or water).

Ersilia and Jesse also serve as a link between non-profit organizations, hospitals, community health services, the Texas Workforce Commission, and educational facilities. As Referral Specialists, their goal is to identify common concerns among neighbors, disseminate information about resources within the community, verify eligibility for assistance, manage social service program enrollment, and evaluate the effectiveness of services and programs.

to schedule a meeting in his office at the Food Bank, 3809 East Rio Grande. If you live elsewhere in our service area (Calhoun, Colorado, DeWitt, Goliad, Gonzales, Jackson, Lavaca, Matagorda, Refugio, or Wharton County), Ersilia will travel to your community and arrange to meet you at a public library or a food pantry. Call Ersilia for an appointment at 361-935-3060. Jesse y Ersilia hablan Español.

For more information, please visit the Food Bank of the Golden Crescent at 3809 East Rio Grande in Victoria or call us at 361-578-0591. We work hard every day to help people get the assistance they need, and we look forward to helping you if you need us.

*Jesse J. Olivarez is a Food Bank Case Navigator and Referral Specialist. Contact him at jolivarez@foodbankgc.org.*

*Meridith Byrd is the Director of Community Engagement. Contact her at mbyrd@foodbankgc.org.*

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## I would like to apply for services. How can I meet with Ersilia or Jesse?

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# Innovation Collective works with community to bring out the best in Victoria



Karissa Winters. Contributed photo.

by Karissa Winters, Victoria community lead for Innovation Collective

Victoria residents have a tendency to underestimate their own community.

Victorians with entrepreneurial ambitions often feel like they need to move somewhere else to make their dreams a reality. I grew up here myself, but I moved away because there was no clear pathway for me. Now, as a community lead with Innovation Collective, I've returned to Victoria with a goal of helping give residents the tools they need to succeed.

Our goal is to activate the potential in this community by bringing people together for mentorship, partnership and learning opportunities. Oftentimes there's a misconception that everyone in Victoria knows each other, but when we host events, we get to see people interact who've lived here their whole lives and never met—and bringing these people together to share feedback goes a long way toward helping residents make their big ideas happen.

Innovation Collective partners with local contributors like the City of Victoria, David and Tammy Murphy, Melvin and Janey Lack, Frost Bank, the Haberling McLeroy Family Foundation, Klean Corp International/Tami and Robby Burdge, Pat and Bill Blanchard, Bill Wendlandt, the Victoria Economic Development

Corporation, Victoria County, the Victoria Sales Tax Development Corporation, Victoria College, Victoria ISD and the University of Houston-Victoria College of Busi-

ness. Our success team, made up of representatives of these agencies and interested stakeholders, helps us leverage resources to grow Victoria while preserving its

unique character.

We've been hosting seminars and networking events in Victoria since December, and it's been incredible to see how many residents

have great business ideas that they might not otherwise have had a chance to share. I've had business owners come to me in tears

See INNOVATION, pg. 10

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# Noticias del Mundo

Por CNN

**RUSIA Y UCRANIA** – El presidente de Rusia, Vladímir Putin, ordenó este domingo que las fuerzas de disuasión de su país, que incluyen armas nucleares, entraran en su máximo estado de alerta, mientras las fuerzas ucranianas se enfrentaban a las tropas rusas en múltiples ciudades de Ucrania.

La medida del presidente ruso se produce ante la condena universal de las potencias occidentales por el ataque no provocado de Moscú a Ucrania, que se encuentra ya en su cuarto día.

“Altos funcionarios de los principales países de la OTAN se han permitido hacer comentarios

agresivos sobre nuestro país, por lo que ordeno al ministro de Defensa y al jefe del Estado Mayor que pongan en alerta de combate a la Fuerza de Disuasión del Ejército ruso”, dijo Putin en una reunión televisada con altos funcionarios de defensa rusos.

Putin también dijo que las sanciones occidentales impuestas a Rusia eran ilegales.

Mientras tanto, la oficina del presidente de Ucrania, Volodymyr Zelensky, confirmó que una delegación ucraniana se reuniría con una delegación rusa para mantener conversaciones en la frontera entre Ucrania y Belarús, tras las garantías ofrecidas por el presidente de Belarús, Aleksander Lukash-

enko.

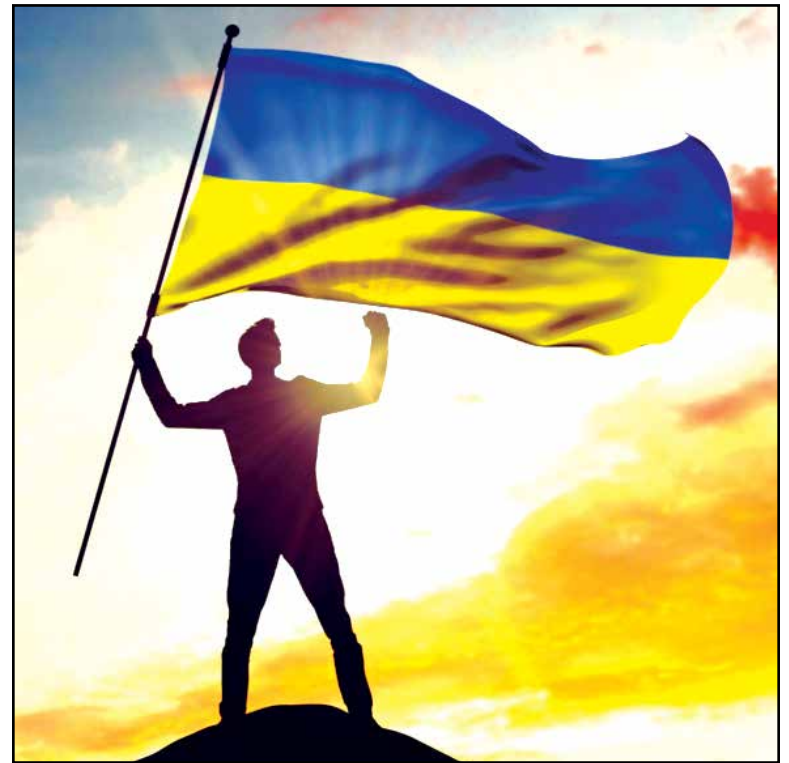
Zelensky había dicho anteriormente que estaría dispuesto a mantener conversaciones con Rusia, pero no en Belarús, señalando que las acciones militares rusas se lanzan desde ese país.

Ucrania declaró que su fuerza aérea derribó este domingo un misil de crucero lanzado contra Kyiv desde Belarús., país aliado de Rusia y que ha desempeñado un papel importante en la invasión rusa de Ucrania.

La oficina de Zelensky dijo que Lukashenko había llamado a su homólogo ucraniano este domingo. “Los políticos han acordado que la delegación ucraniana se reunirá con la rusa sin condiciones previas en la frontera ucraniano-bielorrusa, cerca del río Pripyat”, dijo la oficina de Zelensky.

“Aleksander Lukashenko ha asumido la responsabilidad de garantizar que todos los aviones, helicópteros y misiles estacionados en el territorio bielorruso permanecerán en tierra durante el viaje, la reunión y el regreso de la delegación ucraniana”.

El giro hacia las conversaciones se produce mientras el conflicto



Bandera de Ucrania. Contributed photo.

sigue sacudiendo a Ucrania.

En un mensaje de video el domingo, Zelensky acusó a las tropas rusas de atacar a los civiles, incluidos los niños, y pidió una investigación internacional sobre el conflicto.

El Ministerio de Defensa ruso afirmó anteriormente en un comunicado que los ataques se dirigían únicamente a la infraestructura militar: “Las Fuerzas Armadas de la Federación Rusa no atacan ciu-

dades y pueblos, toman todas las medidas para salvar la vida de los civiles”.

Pero Zelensky rechazó esto, diciendo: “Mintieron cuando dijeron que no atacarían a la población civil. Desde las primeras horas de la invasión, las tropas rusas han atacado infraestructuras civiles”.

Ucrania está “documentando sus crímenes”, dijo, y añadió: “Esto es terror”.

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# Shaw strives to make a difference through use of social media locally



Caleb Shaw, Meet Victoria with Caleb Shaw. Contributed photo.

by Peter Morales

Victoria resident and local realtor Caleb Shaw has created a social media outlet in Victoria that has, “grown legs and sort of taken off on its own,” Shaw said

Meet Victoria with Caleb Shaw, Victoria Events with Caleb Shaw and Election Editions with Caleb Shaw are garnering viewers by leaps and bounds locally. “I guess I just do my own thing locally promoting the city of Victoria, providing an alternative to local media outlets and by striving to provide an opportunity to satisfy Victorians’ hunger for knowledge through a different platform.”

Describing himself as a naturally inquisitive individual is what brought him to the screen, albeit the small screen.

“Listen, I’m thankful to God that what started as an idea to determine if there were other like-minded individuals out there were tired of the news that was available daily. All the doom, gloom and violence; I for one was tired of it,” Shaw said.

Shaw says that he likes to ask questions and so his shows are an extension of that, especially around election time.

“I was pleasantly surprised at how the debates I sponsored

turned out, surprised at how well they were clicked on, and as it turned out didn’t just have local candidates but also included regional and state-wide races such as the 13th Court of Appeals. People are looking for news from different platforms, and people have embraced the work that my outlets are performing,” he said. Some of his previous efforts have garnered almost 10,000 views, according to social media statistics.

When questioned about the lack of coverage by local mainstream media about his success he indicated, “Hey that is their prerogative, but you can rest assured that in all cases I notified media outlets, now whether they decide to publicize my efforts, well that up to them. Respectfully, I don’t need them.”

Shaw is married and has a two-year-old daughter. He is from the Alice, TX area, and served in the

United States Air Force for over seven years where he served as an airborne radar technician, and later as a paralegal for the local Judge Advocate General’s Office (JAG).

“I’m the kind of guy that follows his heart, with that in mind, I feel that there are a lot of stories

in this community that are dying to be told,” he said. “Hopefully, we will continue to grow in our relationship with the Victoria community, and people will continue to accept us. The recent success of my show is bigger than me. I’m simply a spoke in the wheel.”

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# Something Magical set to move and expand to larger location

by Peter Moralez

On February 1, 2022, Something Magical will move to their new location at 9501 North Navarro Street, Suite B.

“We’ve outgrown our current location and it’s time to expand,” according to Donna Shook, owner. “Our new location will give us more shelf space and allow us to also increase the line of services that we offer our ever-increasing customer base.”

Shook describes Something Magical as a spirituality store that serves the purpose of spiritual enlightenment and enrichment to the public. They offer books, statues, candles, essential oils, crystals, tarot cards, herbs, and dream catchers for sale.

“We cover a wide range of spiritual needs from Christianity, Buddhism, Norse and Viking beliefs, Wiccan, Ten and Star and Galaxy Families, in addition to other beliefs,” she said.

Some of the services they offer are tarot card readings, channeling, meditation, Quantum hypnosis, Reiki, which is the study of



Something Magical has moved to 9501 North Navarro Street, Suite B. *Contributed photo.*

movement of energy through the body, and crystal healing. Prices for these services vary from \$150 for hypnosis to \$75 for Reiki and crystal healing and \$35 for tarot card readings.

“I feel that the services we offer can take an individual on a spiritual, emotional, mental and even a physical journey that can enlighten them on their purpose in life, offer healing, in many cases, and just help to define what one’s purpose in life may be. We want to wake the masses through spirituality,”

Shook said.

She added, “So many of us wonder what our life is all about, why are we here and what are we supposed to do, especially when we are being pulled in a specific direction.”

Shook, along with her staff attempt to search for answers to some of these questions by opening one’s life through spiritual enrichment.

If you have any questions Something Magical can be reached at 361.579.7077.

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Karaoke Finals (1:00 pm - 3:00 pm)  
Cornhole Registration (3-3:30 pm)  
Cornhole Tournament (4:00 pm)  
Adam Berry (9:00 pm - 10:30 pm)  
Teague Brothers (11:30 pm - 1:00 am)

## PUBLIC SCHEDULE - MAIN EVENTS

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2022

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm Co. Fair and Ag Mechanics Check-in

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2022

8:30 am Market Rabbit Judging  
10:00 am Breeding Rabbit Judging  
Noon Market Broiler Judging

### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022

8:00 am Market Hog Judging  
Noon Grand Opening Ceremony  
Noon - 8:00 pm Petting Zoo Open  
Noon - 9:30 pm Exhibit Hall Open  
2:00 pm - 7:00 pm Co. Fair & Ag Mechanics (VLS Hall)  
4:00 pm Breeding Gilt Judging

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2022

8:00 am - 3:00 pm "Kids Day" School Tours  
8:00 am - 8:00 pm Petting Zoo Open  
8:00 am Breeding Bulls Show  
8:00 am Junior Breeding Heifers Show  
10:00 am - 10:00 pm Exhibit Hall Open  
10:00 am - 7:00 pm Co. Fair & Ag Mechanics (VLS Hall)  
1:00 pm Carcass Awards Announced  
2:00 pm - 3:30 pm Market Lamb Judging  
3:30 pm - 5:00 pm Market Goat Judging  
6:00 pm Market Steer Judging

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2022

9:00 am 4-H/FFA Livestock Judging Contest  
1:00 pm Special Livestock Show  
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm PeeWee Livestock Show  
10:00 am - 10:00 pm Exhibit Hall Open  
Noon - 8:00 pm Petting Zoo Open  
4:00 pm Western Games  
7:00 pm Ultimate Showmanship  
8:00 pm - Midnight Youth Dance (VLS Hall)

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2022

Noon - 6:00 pm Exhibit Hall Open  
1:30 pm Mutton Bustin'  
3:30 pm 4-H/FFA Awards & Scholarships Ceremony (Annex)  
4:30 pm **MANDATORY EXHIBITOR AUCTION MEETING (Annex)**

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# Charlando de TV y Cine

por Santos Raza y colaboradores

The Batman llega a los cines españoles el 4 de marzo. El reparto se completa con Zoë Kravitz como

Selina Kyle/Catwoman, Jeffrey Wright como James Gordon, John Turturro como Carmine Falcone y

Andy Serkis como Alfred Pennyworth, entre otros. Vamos, que en esta franquicia



The Batman y sus enemigos. Contributed photo.

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16. Tisas 1911 Carry 45 ACP
17. ATI Cavalry 20ga O/U wood stock
18. Savage MK1-G 22 single shot
19. Smith & Wesson M&P22 pistol 22LR
20. Mossberg 500 12ga pump camo
21. Diamondback DB-15 AR-15 223
22. Remington 580 22LR single shot wood stock
23. Ruger Wrangler 22LR revolver
24. Weatherby Element 20ga waterfowl camo
25. Savage 110 Hunter 22-250 syn.
26. Heritage Rough Rider Combo 22LR/22mg black pearl grips
27. Mossberg 835 12ga pump waterfowl camo
28. SavageWalking Varminter 22 Hornet syn.
29. Heritage Rough Rider Combo 22LR/22mg cocobolo grips
30. Century Arms Catamount HD 12 pumo- 12ga
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38. Anderson AR-15 223
39. Stevens Field 20ga pump
40. Smith & Wesson M&P9 Shield EZ 9MM
41. Ruger American Predator 6mm Creedmoor
42. KelTec CP33 22LR Semi
43. Smith & Wesson M&P9 Shield EZ 9MM
44. Savage A-17 17HMR Semi Lam. Stock
45. Beretta M9 22LR
46. Anderson AR-15 223
47. Taurus GX4 9mm
48. Ruger 10/22 22LR Birch Stock
49. Sig Sauer P365 SAS 9mm
50. Henry U.S. Survival 22LR
51. Tisas 1911 Duty 55/rail 45 ACP
52. ATI Cavalry 12ga O/U wood stock

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Drawing will be April 30th at the Emmy Saenz Foundation First Annual Gala Fundraiser Event. Gala will be at the Victoria Community Center Dome from 6pm-11pm. Follow us on Facebook for more information.

Thank you so much for your support for a very worthy cause.

a Bruce Wayne se le valora por el enemigo al que tenga que hacer frente. En la nueva entrega de la saga, The Batman, Robert Pattinson toma el relevo y ocupa el hueco que dejó Ben Affleck tras Liga de la justicia. En esta ocasión, nos encontraremos con un Bruce Wayne en sus comienzos como justiciero. No es un experto y aún está creando su propia identidad. Mientras se pregunta quién es llega Enigma, un asesino en serie que atemoriza a los ciudadanos de Gotham City. Para acabar con él, tendrá que hacer alianzas que van en contra de su propia filosofía.

Sean Penn está en Ucrania rodando un documental sobre la invasión rusa

El actor, muy comprometido con causas sociales y políticas, ha afirmado que se ha desplazado al

terreno para contar la verdad sobre la agresión rusa al país, será ayudado por el gobierno de Ucrania.

En las últimas horas, Rusia ha invadido Ucrania. Se trata de la mayor agresión a la soberanía de un país en Europa desde la Segunda Guerra Mundial como informan desde medios como El Español. Mientras suenan todas las alarmas y la población civil comienza a huir a lugares y regiones más seguras, el actor y director Sean Penn ha decidido desplazarse hasta Ucrania para rodar un documental a pie de calle sobre esta invasión sin precedentes. Para la realización, cuentan desde Newsweek, ha contado con la bendición del gobierno ucraniano.

Un documental que lleva meses de preparación y que se ha acel-

See CHARLANDO, pg. 9

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Sean Penn esta en Ucrania. *Contributed photo.*

## CHARLANDO

from pg. 8

erado en las últimas horas. Pese a lo que podamos creer, no se trata de un viaje amarillista, de un truco publicitario o de un impulso de última hora. El actor lleva desde finales de noviembre preparando sobre el terreno el documental, diseñando una cobertura pormenorizada del eventual conflicto y recorriéndose diferentes regiones del país de cara a empaparse de la idiosincrasia ucraniana con respecto a la amenaza rusa y de los sentimientos de la población civil frente a la amenaza de las fuerzas armadas de Putin y sus partidarios.

Penn ha pasado mucho tiempo con las fuerzas armadas del país, incluso desplazándose con ellos en

la zona de Operación de las Fuerzas Conjuntas para informarse mejor sobre la crisis diplomática y la posibilidad de una guerra que, al final, ha acabado sucediendo. Según remarcan desde es spin-of la pieza documental está siendo filmada con un grupo de producción ucraniano, todo ello con el beneplácito de las autoridades del país.

“Sean Penn está demostrando una valentía de la que otros muchos carecen, en particular los políticos occidentales. Cuanta más gente así haya, amigos de verdad de Ucrania, que apoyen nuestra lucha por la libertad, más rápidamente podemos detener esta atroz invasión por parte de Rusia”, apostilla el comunicado oficial emitido

por el gobierno. Penn ha estado presente en algunos momentos críticos para la soberanía del país, como la rueda de prensa realizada el pasado jueves en Kiev, en la que

los oficiales del gobierno hablaron de la situación. El actor ya ha participado en otros documentales y campañas en contra de la guerra, como el célebre Citasen Penn, ro-

dado en Haití, así como en operaciones humanitarias diversas. Las consecuencias políticas, sociales y económicas de esta crisis son imposibles de calcular.

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## CONTEST, from pg. 1

Shown from left are VC President Jennifer Kent; first-place winner Zyion Jackson, 10; second-place winner Kimberly DelaGarza, 11; third-place winner Camila Luna, 11; and UHV President Bob Glenn.

The top three received scholarships to UHV and VC. Zyion received a \$2,000 UHV scholarship and a \$1,000 VC scholarship, Kimberly received a \$1,000 UHV scholarship and a \$500 VC scholarship, and Camila was given a \$500 UHV scholarship and a \$250 VC scholarship.

## INNOVATION, from pg. 3

because what we're doing gives them hope that they can achieve their goals right here in Victoria.

Creating a favorable business environment will help all residents, not just business owners. Thriving businesses that support each other help to create a more vibrant community. Our businesses owners benefit from having an abundance mindset: that is, the idea that helping one business doesn't take away resources from another but instead allows all to flourish.

A vibrant business environment can also help to attract corporations that may see Victoria as a potential research and development engine and decide to set up shop here. This would bring new

jobs and create opportunities for residents.

Whether you're an established entrepreneur or if you have an idea you'd like to pitch, we'd love to see you at one of our community events. Here are some that are coming up:

- IC Studio: Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m., online. These virtual workshops will give you a chance to connect with mentors and get help creating a business plan. Visit <https://innovationcollective.co/iclc-membership-victoria/> for more information.

If you happen to see me out and about, feel free to tell me about what you're working on and let me know if I can help connect you with any resources. I'm happy to do whatever I can to help this community realize its full potential.

Do you have plumbing or home damage caused by the winter storms in February?

[https://bit.ly/Winter\\_Storm\\_Survey](https://bit.ly/Winter_Storm_Survey)



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## Driven To Excellence!

# State of the Victoria Independent School District



Dr. Quintin Shepherd, VISD Superintendent. *Contributed photo.*

by Dr. Quintin Shepherd, VISD Superintendent

This week Victoria ISD presented at the Chamber of Commerce luncheon. We present annually as an opportunity to update our Chamber partners about the good things happening in VISD. The presentation is meant to be informative for the audience and we pack as much information as possible into a very short window of time. We can never get to everything, so we try to focus on two or three key areas for us. In the past few years, we have focused heavily on the state of finances for the district, because that has been a concern for us, and we recognized the need to improve our overall standing.

When I began in 2018, our fund balance at year-end was \$11.8 Million. That was a dangerously low amount for a district of our size, and it put a great strain on our community. After four years of restructuring from top to bottom (including cutting nearly 30 percent of central office administration. To be clear, we started at a percentage lower than the state average and reduced from there), I am proud to

say our financial standing has improved dramatically and the state of our finances is exceptional. Our fund balance stands at \$37.5 Million, which is the recommended level the state suggests for Victoria ISD and helps us achieve a perfect score on our financial integrity rating. Perfect score in case you missed it the first time.

I only presented two slides on finances. Mostly, I focused on the fact that every single audit and rating organization (state, federal, and local) finds us to be superior and without any areas of concern. This year I focused almost exclusively on student learning pathways, student achievement, student learning challenges coming out of COVID, Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, Dual Enrollment, and graduation rates. I also focused a bit on communications since we have launched the first-

ever VISD mobile app, re-designed and launched the website, have started a YouTube channel, enhanced our monthly administration report, and launched a communications e-newsletter, which is still the very best way to get accurate information about the district.

One of the things I spoke about at length during the student achievement portion of the presentation is our work within Career and Technical Education (CTE). We have a total of 11 Career Clusters represented in our CTE program list: Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; Architecture and Construction; Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications; Business Marketing and Finance; Education and Training; Health Science; Human Services; Law and Public Service; and Manufacturing; STEM; and Transportation, Distribution and

Logistics. From those 11 Career Clusters, we offer 18 programs of study. These all represent different pathways for our students through high school as they find their “&.”

Of those eighteen programs, we offer 59 CTE courses! That is variety. I am sure you are wondering if more courses mean more students

See VISD, pg. 13

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# FISCAL YEAR 2022 PROPOSED BUDGET

Balanced Budget of  
**\$171,254,369**



- \$185,785 - COPS Grant Funds
- \$1,022,596 - Convention & Visitor's Bureau
- \$1,702,798 - Grant Funds
- \$2,754,122 - Motel Tax Fund
- \$2,209,397 - Other Enterprise
- \$6,718,182 - Solid Waste Services
- \$7,254,148 - ARPA Grant

The General Fund supports the majority of the basic services of the City.

## FY22 Capital Improvement Plan **\$34.37M**

### Residential Street Projects - \$7.49 Million

North Heights Ph. VII Reconstruction	\$2M
Residential Street Program (Maintenance Projects)	\$2.9M
Woodway Ph. III Reconstruction	\$1.7M
Bridle Ridge Reconstruction Ph. II	\$544K
Design of Dairy Road Reconstruction (Salem to Whispering Creek)	\$300K

### Thoroughfare Street Projects - \$10.51 Million

Crestwood Ph. III Reconstruction (Additional Funding)	\$900K
Airline Road Mill and Overlay (Sam Houston to Stockbauer)	\$2M
Mockingbird Mill and Overlay (Laurent to Navarro)	\$596K
Ben Wilson Corridor (Airline to Red River)	\$7M

### Residential Drainage Projects - \$4.05 Million

Lone Tree Acres Drainage	\$3.3M
Northcrest Drainage Project (Twin 90's)	\$750K

### Utility Projects - \$3.51 Million

Country Club Dr. Sanitary Sewer Line Replacement (Design)	\$141K
Laurent St. Water Line Replacement (Design)	\$185K
16" High Service Connection (Main St. and Vine St.)	\$600K
Regional WW Plant Clarifier Project (Design)	\$160K
Main St. Sanitary Sewer Line Replacement	\$1.9M
Power Secure Generator (Water Pump Station #3)	\$523K

### Utility/Streets Projects - \$3.98 Million

Tanglewood Phase I Utility/Street Reconstruction (Design)	\$765K
College Park Utility/Street Design Reconstruction (Design)	\$1.33M
Bon Aire Utility/Street Design Reconstruction (Design)	\$1.88M

### Sidewalk/Streetlight Projects - \$1.21 Million

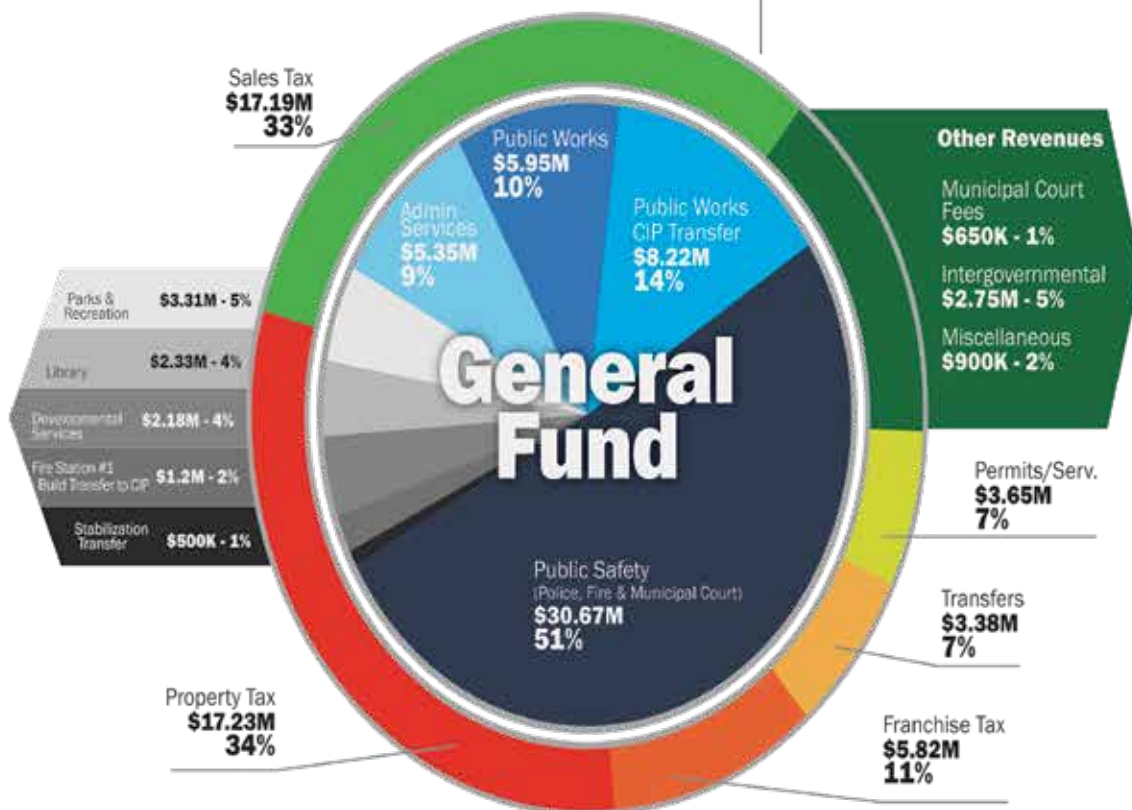
Citywide Street Lighting LED Project	\$250K
O'Conner Elementary & Stroman Middle School Sidewalk Project	\$334K
Leary Lane Sidewalk Expansion	\$625K

### Traffic Signal Projects - \$175K

Traffic Signal (Water St @ Moody Street)	\$175K
--	--------

### Facility Projects - \$3.35 Million

Environmental Services Building Project	\$500K
Fire Station #1 Remodel	\$2.1M
Sports Facility Improvements	\$750K



## Key Initiatives

Previously budgeted projects beginning in FY 2022

Unified Development Code	\$250K
Facilities Master Plan	\$200K
Work Order/Asset Management Software	\$250K
Duck Pond	\$1.25M
Riverside Splashpad	\$1M

### Sales Tax

2018 Actual	16,879,223
2019 Actual	17,111,735
2020 Actual	16,337,766
2021 Projected	17,677,000
2022 Proposed	17,185,000

### Property Tax Revenue

FY 2018 Actual	15,143,523.00
FY 2019 Actual	15,360,374.00
FY 2020 Actual	15,970,033.00
FY 2021 Projected	16,568,109.00
FY 2022 Proposed	17,229,816.00

### Property Tax **\$0.5882**

- \$0.5882 rate \$0.0233 lower than last year
- Increase \$1.1M (\$662K associated to General Fund which \$196K is new property)
- Tax rate includes \$500K for Bond redemption

**VISD**, from pg. 11

served, and the answer is yes. If we look at our historic student enrollment by cluster, we are up in nearly every area.

As an example, in 2017 we had 138 students enrolled in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) CTE courses. In 2022, we serve 425 students. We would be very grateful if you could help us spread the message that in the past five years, we have increased the number of students taking STEM-related coursework by 208 percent! This type of growth is virtually unheard of, anywhere in the state. I am very much aware of a negative narrative within our community about VISD schools, but it is simply untrue when we look at the data. Our kids are amazing, and our teachers are superheroes. We are forever grateful to the many community partners who have helped us build this out.

Remember, this is just one pathway through high school. We also have P-TECH pathways, Advanced Placement pathways, Dual Credit Pathways, and Dual enrollment pathways. In case you are wondering, we have more students enrolled in Dual Credit and Dual Enrollment than at any time

in the history of the district! These students are earning college credit as they move through high school, saving our parents a tremendous amount of future tuition costs. From last year to this year alone, we have increased enrollment in these programs by 24.7 percent. More kids are in both dual credit and dual enrollment. More kids, learning more is not just a catchphrase for us. It is simply how we do business.

One last point of pride. When I arrived in the district in 2018, we tested 272 students for our gifted and talented program. We served a total of 580 students in our programs at that time. We currently serve 755 students in the program and tested 1,290 this year! We have increased our identified gifted and talented student population by 30 percent. When we say we want kids to find their genius in our strategic plan, we truly mean it.

All these pathways are great options for our kids, their parents, and our community as we strive to have 100 percent of our students walk across the graduation stage with their "&". Speaking of graduation, we outperform the state by 5.6 percent. For our homeless students, we outperform the state by 10.7 percent! Our homeless stu-

dents graduate at a higher rate than the average graduation rate for the State of Texas. That is something to brag about. We are closing the gap and raising the bar at the same time, and with great success.

Did I mention that we have

been in a pandemic for the past two years and have faced the most difficult period in education that any of us can ever remember? Systems around the state and nation find themselves in disarray and throughout all the chaos the

VISD is strong and growing stronger. I just wish more people knew the truth about our schools, and I would love for you to be a partner in helping me spread this good news!

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# American Rescue Plan Act

The U.S. Department of the Treasury recently announced the launch of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, established by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, to provide \$350 billion in emergency funding for eligible state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments.

## Broadband

Invest in broadband infrastructure with modern utility in mind. Broadband efforts should aim to improve reliability, accessibility, and affordability of internet.

## Utility Infrastructure

Make necessary improvements to water sewer infrastructures, including projects that address the impacts of climate change. Utility investments should aim at improving the reliability and resiliency of the utility system.

## Organizational Needs

Address needs within City departments or amongst city essential employees that improve the capabilities of staff to respond to public needs and support employees most susceptible to COVID.

## Tourism/Travel Industry

Speed the recovery of tourism, travel, and hospitality sectors that are just beginning to mend.

## Community Grants

Assist organizations that serve the needs of vulnerable populations within the community, particularly those heavily impacted by the pandemic. Investments can range from assisting individuals to supporting redevelopment of entire neighborhoods.

## Economic Development

Provide aid to small business and industries negatively impacted by COVID-19 and its effects on the local economy.

To read more about the American Rescue Plan Act, please visit [victoriatx.gov/930/american-rescue-plan-act](http://victoriatx.gov/930/american-rescue-plan-act)

### Allocation:

The total allocation for The City of Victoria is \$14,508,296. Half of the funds were received June 2021 and the remainder will be received next year.

All funds received must be committed to an eligible expense by December 31, 2024.

## Employee Compensation

The City of Victoria conducted a comprehensive compensation/classification study for 2020-2021. The study consisted of position/job analysis for all positions, review of Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Exempt and Non-exempt designations, internal equality, salary and benefits survey, competitiveness analysis, salary range recommendations, job title changes, and Fiscal Year estimates and implementation strategies. The last time the City completed a comprehensive study was in the 1990's.

### Phase I: Police/Fire Step Plan - Implemented on January 1, 2021

- Developed new step plan for certified Police/Fire positions. This new step plan included data from the City's Compensation/Classification study and input from the departments. The new step plan has a brand-new look, competitive market ranges, and added command/leadership level positions that were not included in the previous structure.
- Phase I was for the majority of employee's to be placed in the step plan on the next nearest step to their current salary without reducing pay. This resulted in a 4% average pay adjustment for Fire, and 5% for Police.

### Phase II: General Population - Implemented on October 1, 2021

- The City has approximately 191 unique civilian job descriptions in use for providing a full complement of municipal services, minor title modifications and position descriptions have been updated to reflect employee input on current job duties.
- Using +/- 5% to define competitive, the City's current salary ranges are below market average for 60% of positions. An updated salary range table was designed, and updated pay range placements have been adopted using the market data from the study, the City's hierarchy, and internal equality.
- Phase II will move those employees below the new minimum to the minimum of the new salary range for their position.
- The hourly minimum wage for full-time City employees has been increased to \$13.00 from \$11.00.
- The hourly minimum wage for part-time City employees has been increased to \$10.00 from \$9.00.

### Phase III:

- When financially able, the city will be looking to provide additional pay adjustments for city personnel who are above the minimum for this initial year and consider experience/longevity with the City.

## CITY

, from pg. 1  
improvements will not only create a better traffic flow up and down these two major thoroughfares, but also improve the safety for drivers," Garza said.

Regarding city parks the city manager indicated, "Victoria is blessed with ample green space but what we can continue to do is to make better use of our green spaces with the addition of things like dog parks and improving sporting venues throughout the park system, which I feel will improve tourism in our community," he said.

Garza added that he also feels that improving the usefulness of the park system by not building more space but by investing in the variety of things to do serves to reduce expenditures and is much more cost efficient.

Continuing beautification of the downtown area is part of the Downtown Master Plan. "I feel it's essential that we develop downtown Victoria in order of create a real sense of space," Garza said. "I envision a real continuity in the downtown area that lets visitors know that they are here and that they are in downtown Victoria."

He sites things like the brick inlay on the sidewalks serves to create a downtown ambiance. In addition, he wants to create a visitors' center that is open when visitors frequent Victoria like on the weekends.

Finally, changes to the city charter with the addition of things like term limits are important.

"We are in the final stages of limiting consecutive terms that any one individual can serve in any one post," Garza said. "New candidates with fresh ideas can be an integral part of our system of government in Victoria and we are striving to bring that about with voter approval."

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# La Cocina de Tia Yole



French toast with strawberry butter. *Contributed photo.*

## HEAVENLY HEART-SHAPED PANCAKES

2½ cups all-purpose flour  
 1 cup (6 ounces) Nestlé Toll House Semi-Sweet Chocolate Mini Morsels  
 1-tablespoon baking powder  
 ½ teaspoon salt  
 1¾-cup milk  
 2 large eggs  
 1/3-cup vegetable oil, plus more for the griddle and cookie cutters  
 1/3 cup packed brown sugar  
 3-inch heart-shaped metal cookie cutters (optional)  
 Powdered Sugar

1. Combine flour, morsels, baking powder and salt in large bowl. Combine milk, eggs, oil and brown sugar in medium bowl; add to flour mixture. Stir just until moistened (batter may be lumpy).  
 2. Heat griddle or skillet over medium heat; brush lightly with oil. Pour ¼ cup batter onto hot griddle into the shape of a heart. Cook until bubbles begin to burst. Turn; continue to cook about 1 minute longer or until golden. Repeat with remaining batter. (For perfectly shaped pancakes, brush inside of cookie cutters with oil; place on griddle. Pour about ¼ cup batter into the cookie cutters and cook until bubbles begin to burst. Remove cookie cutter. Turn; continue to cook about 1 minute longer or until golden.)

3. Sprinkle with powdered sugar before serving. Makes 18 pancakes.

## FRENCH TOAST WITH STRAWBERRY BUTTER

*Strawberry Butter Ingredients:*  
 ½ cup Land O Lakes Butter, softened  
 1/3 cup powdered sugar  
 1 tablespoon strawberry preserves  
*French Toast Ingredients:*  
 8 (¾-inch) slices Italian bread  
 1/3 cup Land O Lakes Traditional or Fat Free Half & Half

2 Land O Lakes All Natural Eggs, slightly beaten  
 1-teaspoon vanilla  
 ¼ cup Land O Lakes Butter  
 Powdered Sugar

1. Combine ½ cup butter, 1/3 cup powdered sugar and preserves in a small bowl. Beat at medium speed, scraping bowl often, until creamy. Cover; refrigerate until serving time.

2. Cut bread slices with a 2½ -3-inch heart-shaped cookie cutter.

Combine half & half, eggs and vanilla in a 9-inch pie plate; mix well. Dip 4 bread shapes into half & half mixture, turning to coat both sides; let stand 1 to 2 minutes.  
 3. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a 10-inch skillet or griddle until sizzling; add coated bread. Cook over medium heat, turning once, until golden brown (3 to 4 minutes). Remove from skillet; keep warm. Carefully clean skillet with paper towel, if necessary.

4. Repeat dipping remaining

bread shapes into egg mixture. Melt remaining butter in skillet and cook bread as directed. 5. To serve, lightly sprinkle hot French toast with powdered sugar; serve with Strawberry Butter. Yield: 4 (2-slice) servings.

6. Recipe Tip: Spread any remaining Strawberry Butter on bagel or English muffins.

7. Recipe Tip: If you do not have a heart-shaped cookie cutter, use a heart-shaped template and sharp knife to cut heart shapes.

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