



February 2014



Commissioner Grady Prestage's
PRECINCT 2 COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

"Commissioner's Corner" (February Edition)



Click the link to watch the February edition of Commissioner's Corner:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=364HwaTTBq4>

**County and City Leaders
Celebrate the Official Opening of
Fort Bend County
PINNACLE Senior Center**



From left to right: State Rep Ron Reynolds; Precinct 4 Commissioner James Patterson; HUD Field Director Dr. Pringle; Deputy Director Steve Tinnermon; Councilmember At-Large Michael Kubosh; District K Councilmember Larry Green; Precinct 2 Commissioner Grady Prestage; Precinct 2 Constable Ruben Davis; PINNACLE Center Manager Sonya Santee; County Clerk Diane Wilson; Director City of Houston HHS Stephen Williams; Renita Thompson; Charles Freeman IV

On Friday, February 14th, Commissioner Grady Prestage and other county and city leaders celebrated the Grand Opening and Ribbon-Cutting for the newly constructed Fort Bend County Pinnacle Senior Center. The PINNACLE Senior Center located at 5525-C Hobby Road, Houston, TX.77053 (*Across from Christa McAuliffe Middle School*) is a joint project between Fort Bend and the City of Houston Housing and Community Development.

“I’m excited about the many programs the PINNACLE Center offers to our residents.

**Precinct Two Celebrates Black History:
*Terry v. Adams***



According to the Texas Historical Commission (THC Marker File #16252), the U.S. Supreme Court heard a series of significant Texas voting rights cases during the first half of the 20th Century which collectively ended the “White Primary” system established in many areas of the south after the Civil War. White Primaries were unofficial, pre-election polls prohibited to African-Americans that effectively prevented them from having any political influence.

In 1950, African-Americans Willie Melton a farmer, and businesswoman Arizona Fleming, began a suffrage movement in Fort Bend County that led to legal action. John Terry and other black county residents agreed to lend their names as plaintiffs in a class action lawsuit filed against A.J. Adams and other officers of the Jay Bird Democratic Association. The

I think it will be a great addition to the quality of life of Fort Bend County,” said Commissioner Prestage as hundreds of guest who attended the Grand Opening and Ribbon-Cutting looked on.



There were many guest in attendance.



The PINNACLE Senior Center

The 10,000 sq. ft. LEED facility a first for Fort Bend officially opened its doors to the public on January 21, 2014 and is operated by Fort Bend County Health and Human Services Department under the direction of M. desVignes- Kendrick, MD. Services offered at the Center are FREE for Fort Bend /Houston residents ages 50 plus and will include: preventive healthcare, physical/social activities, and access to other county resources. The Center amenities include a fully equipped exercise room with treadmills, ellipticals,

Jay Birds functioned as a whites-only political organization that operated unofficial “Straw Elections” to select Democratic nominees for local elections. Since most Texans consistently voted for Democratic candidates, any nominee selected by the Jay Birds invariably won in the general election.

The case was heard in the U.S. District Court in Houston, where the court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, because the Jay Birds were operating as a political party and therefore subject to state and federal laws protecting voters’ rights. The ruling enabled the county’s African-Americans to vote in an upcoming Jay Bird Primary Election. An appeal filed by the Jay Birds was heard in 1951 by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, who overturned the original judgment by the U.S. District Court. In 1952, local supporters raised funds to enable an appeal to be filed.

The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments on January 16, 1953 and on May 4, 1953 in *Terry v. Adams*, the high court upheld the original ruling in favor of the plaintiffs. By 1959, the Jay Birds Democratic Association had suspended their activities.

The *Terry v. Adams* historical marker is located on Willie Melton Blvd. in Kendleton, Texas. For more information, on this and other historic matters we encourage county residents to visit the Fort Bend County Heritage Unlimited Museum located at 630 Charlie Roberts Lane, Kendleton, TX 77451.

full circuit training stations, Wi-Fi internet café and library, large multi-purpose room, kitchen, and dental, and wellness clinics.

The City of Houston Health and Human Services Department is partnering with Fort Bend County to provide Public Health Nursing, Wellness, and Dental Services.

The PINNACLE Center of Fort Bend County is open from 7:30 am- 4:30 pm Monday – Friday.

For more information, please contact Facilities & Programs Manager Sonya Santee at 832.816.9540 or email her at sonya.santee@fortbendcountytexas.gov



Grand Parkway/SH 99 – Opening from US 59 to FM 1464

The segment of the Grand Parkway between US 59 and FM 1464 will be complete and opened to traffic on Thursday, February 27, 2014, subject to inclement weather. The traveling public will be able to utilize the newly constructed toll bridges over Riverpark Dr., New Territory Blvd., and Sandhill/US 90A/FM 1464. Toll plazas for these new bridges will only accept electronic toll tags (EZ-TAG, TxTag, and TollTag). No cash will be accepted for Grand Parkway tolling. Motorist may still use the Grand Parkway and avoid paying tolls by exiting prior to each tolled overpass.

Precinct Two Remembers Arizona Fleming



Fort Bend's Arizona Fleming Elementary School was named in honor of the late Arizona Fleming, recognizing her fight to demand political equality for African-Americans in Fort Bend County. The school opened in August 1994 and is located at 14850 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX 77083.

Born in segregated South Texas in 1898, Fleming attended the all-black schools in Richmond, Texas and received her college training at Guadalupe College, an all-black college in Seguin. Upon her return from college, she served as a bookkeeper for a laundry in Houston and was a leading seamstress in the Fort Bend Community.

But it was not her sewing skills that won Fleming fame. Elected in 1927 to be the Secretary-Manager of the newly established Fort Bend Undertaking Company, Fleming soon became the sole owner of the funeral home. She was looked upon as a business genius and a credit to Fort Bend's African-American community because of her business

For detailed information about toll pricing, plaza locations, and future opening dates, please refer to the Fort Bend County Toll Road Authority website: www.fbctra.com

Excerpt from the public service announcement of the Fort Bend Grand Parkway Toll Road Authority.

acumen and financial independence.

The skills Fleming honed in business were eventually used to wage battle for voting rights that was eventually appealed to the nation's highest court. Fleming, joined by Willie Melton, challenged the white only voting and filed a lawsuit that was eventually appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1953. With the high court upholding the original decision of the U.S. District Court, black citizens of Fort Bend County won the right to vote in the county's Democratic primary.

Most of Fleming's fortune was spent fighting this case; however, her life offers a rich chapter in Fort Bend County history.

Authors Marjorie Melton-Adams and Pauline Yelderian of the Kendleton Heritage Society are the sources for this article.

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