



## A NEWSLETTER FOR TOWNE LAKES RESIDENTS

NOVEMBER 2012

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

### Cy-Fair Residents to Spend Less Time on US 290 as Key Construction Completion Dates Move Up

*Chamber to look at future mobility for Cy-Fair at Annual Mobility Forum on Nov. 1*

Cy-Fair residents and businesses can expect to get some much-needed traffic relief on one of the top 25 congested roads in Texas. Thanks to \$168 million in funding provided by state legislators and part of the additional \$2 billion TxDOT identified earlier this year, some key construction projects along US 290 in Houston will be completed up to two decades earlier than originally scheduled. The completion of critical projects also means travelers will see a 40 percent decrease in time spent in traffic along US 290.

"This is a huge win for Texas drivers," said Phil Wilson, TxDOT Executive Director. "Not only will sections of this road be ready 20 years ahead of schedule, they could save drivers 20 minutes in commute time during peak hours on US 290 from IH 610 to SH 99."

TxDOT and the Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA) are working to finalize an agreement to provide the needed funding allocated by the Legislature. Under the agreement, TxDOT will contribute \$787 million and HCTRA \$400 million putting all US 290 projects between IH 610 and SH 99 (Grand Parkway) under construction by the middle of 2014.

#### PROJECT PLANS INCLUDE:

- Reconstruction and widening of US 290
- Four general purpose lanes for in- and outbound traffic
- Two to three reversible managed lanes in the middle to carry HOV and tolled traffic
- Future construction of the parallel Hempstead Tollway
- A bike trail and right-of-way preservation for a high-capacity transit system
- Additional safety improvements that should reduce the number of accidents that typically cause big delays.

"Our economy and our quality of life depend on our transportation system and our ability to efficiently move people, goods and services throughout the state," Lt. Governor Dewhurst said. "We all want to see more roads built so that hardworking Texans can spend less time in traffic and more time at home with their families, but we must resist the natural urge to spend money on easy projects and instead spend our hardworking taxpayers' dollars on projects that will have the greatest impact on our

economy and quality of life -- like the US 290 project."

Leslie Martone, President of the Cy-Fair Houston Chamber of Commerce, said "The US 290 project is a great example of how strong partnerships between the chamber, state and local legislators, transportation entities and the community can produce results." Martone added, "With this infrastructure in place the Cy-Fair area will be better prepared to accommodate the population growth projected for our region; however, there is still a lot of work to be done and we need to stay vigilant in our planning for future mobility in Cy-Fair."

The Cy-Fair Houston Chamber's 5th Annual Mobility Forum will be held on November 1 at the Berry Center. The event is underwritten by Methodist Willowbrook Hospital and will allow guests the opportunity to look at future mobility options. "This year's theme is 'Trains, Planes and Automobiles'". Martone said. "We want to make sure we stay ahead of the game to meet the needs of businesses and residents in Cy-Fair."

#### 'TRAINS, PLANES AND AUTOMOBILES'

*Berry Center, 8877 Barker Cypress Rd, Cypress, TX 77433*

**Thursday, November 1, 10:30 am – 1:30 pm**

#### KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

- Phil Wilson, TxDOT Executive Director

#### FORUM PANEL:

- Seth Moulton, Managing Director of Texas Central Railway
- David Fulton, Director of the Aviation Division for Texas Department of Transportation
- George Greanias, Chief Executive Officer, Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County

*Cost: \$60 per person; tables and sponsorships are available*

The Cy-Fair Houston Chamber of Commerce ([www.cyfairchamber.com](http://www.cyfairchamber.com)) has provided leadership and direction to the Cy-Fair area since 1986. Now over 600 members strong, the Board of Directors and numerous committees interact on state and local levels to help build a strong economy and improve the quality of life within the Cy-Fair area.

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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- Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence.....	713-967-5743
- Runaway Unit .....	713-755-7427
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Cypress Fairbanks ISD Transportation .....	281-897-4380
Rennell Elementary.....	281-213-1550
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Waste Management - Trash .....	713-686-6666

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Harris County Health Department .....	713-439-6260
Post Office.....	281-859-9021
Harris County Public Library.....	281-290-3210
Cy-Fair Hospital.....	281-890-4285
North Cypress Medical Center.....	832-912-3500

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## ARTICLE INFO

The *Tribune* is mailed monthly to all Towne Lake residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to submit information about their organizations in the newsletter. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, recipes, special celebrations, and birthday announcements are also welcome.

To submit an article for consideration please email it to [townelakes@peelinc.com](mailto:townelakes@peelinc.com). The deadline is the 9th of the month prior to the issue.

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## Learn to Increase Business Success with Speed Networking

*Linda Stiles shares a 7-Touches List technique at the Nov. 15 CYFEN meeting*

What are the relationship and business networking skills needed to increase business success? Join Linda Stiles to find out as she presents "Seven Steps to Speed Networking" at the Cy-Fair Express Network (CYFEN) luncheon Nov. 15. President and CEO of Stiles & Associates Leadership Consultants, as well as a dynamic speaker and author of "Team Leaders' Toolkit," Stiles is dedicated to turning today's high-potential employees into the next generation of leaders. After 25 years in the corporate world, Stiles has spent the last decade focused on team building.

All are welcome to attend the monthly meetings of CYFEN, which are held at the Sterling Country Club, 16500 Houston National Blvd. This month's meeting features an extended program so networking will begin at 10:30 a.m. followed with a prompt 11 a.m. start of the program.

Bring business cards for networking. The meeting cost is \$25 with advanced

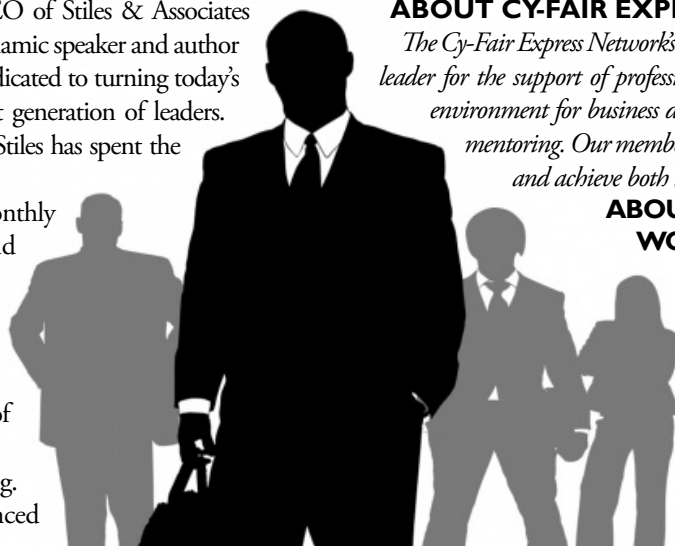
reservations made by the Friday prior to the meeting and \$30 at the door. For information on CYFEN, which is part of the American Business Women's Association, go to [www.CYFEN.org](http://www.CYFEN.org).

### **ABOUT CY-FAIR EXPRESS NETWORK (CYFEN)**

*The Cy-Fair Express Network's vision is to be a community and national leader for the support of professional women by providing a nurturing environment for business development, networking, education and mentoring. Our members have opportunities to pursue excellence and achieve both local and national recognition.*

### **ABOUT AMERICAN BUSINESS WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

*ABWA's mission is to bring together businesswomen of diverse occupations and to provide opportunities for them to help themselves and others grow personally and professionally through leadership, education, networking support and national recognition.*



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## Cypress-Tomball Democrats Host Election Night Watch Party Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>

The Cypress-Tomball Democrats' next monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 6th, will be an election night watch party. It will be held at Rudy's Grill & Cantina, 11760 Grant Rd., Cypress, TX 77429, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

All are welcome to attend and to join this growing club. For more information, contact Olga Moya at [cytomdems@yahoo.com](mailto:cytomdems@yahoo.com).



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## *"If I Installed Solar, How Much Electricity Would It Generate and How Much Would I Save?"*

*By Chris Lee*

For those of us living here in Houston, we're all acutely aware that the sun is a plentiful, if not unrelenting, source of heat and sunlight (okay, the heat is really a byproduct of the intense sunlight). And for many of us I bet that we've thought, "Gosh, if I could harness just some of that free sunlight...." The harder part is trying to answer the obvious questions about installing a solar array or solar panel system on the roof of your home - "How much electricity would it generate and how much money could I save on my electric bills?"

Without having to know much about solar or needing to contact a solar installer or solar company, you can easily get those estimates at your fingertips. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), which is operated by the US Department of Energy, has created a website allowing anyone to calculate the amount of electricity a PV (photovoltaic) system (aka: solar panel array system) would generate. Here's the website (notice that it already takes into account that you're in Houston): <http://rredc.nrel.gov/solar/calculators/PVWATTS/version1/US/Texas/Houston.html>

Here's a shortened link: <http://goo.gl/bRurv>

Once on the website, for your initial estimate, you can use the default information presented and just click on "calculate" at the bottom. On the results page you will see that in Austin, a South facing solar panel array (which means the Array Azimuth = 180 degrees) that's built for 4 kW of electricity generation, would generate 4879 kWh in a year and save you \$473.26. To give you a better estimate, there are 3 settings you can go back and change:

1. **Array Azimuth in degrees.**
2. **DC Rating in kW.**
3. **Cost of Electricity in cents.**

### **ARRAY AZIMUTH:**

If you're considering placing your solar array on the side of your roof that gets the most sunlight and that part of the roof faces due South, then the Array Azimuth would be 180 degrees. If your proposed solar array will be facing Southwest, the azimuth would be 225 degrees. Southeast would be 135 degrees. And so forth. The more accurate your submission, the more accurate your estimate.

### **DC RATING:**

The DC Rating (in kW) default is 4 kW in the calculator. This would be the "size" of electricity generation by your solar array - basically, by adding (or subtracting) more solar panels to your proposed system, the DC Rating would increase (or decrease). Makes sense - if you add more solar panels to your array, you'll increase the amount of electricity generated and therefore increase the amount of money saved.

### **COST OF ELECTRICITY:**

The default is the Texas state average of 9.7 cents per kWh. For those of you with an electricity provider with higher (or soon to be higher) rates, you should change the rate accordingly to get a more realistic estimate.

So that's it, an easy way to determine what you would be generating with a solar array on the roof of your home. This is a simple but fairly accurate way to determine the benefit of installing solar on your home. Of course, YMMV (your mileage may vary) but by getting a fairly accurate estimate of the amount of electricity generated and the money saved, you can better determine whether or not installing a solar array on your roof would make financial sense for you and your family. If you have any questions, please ping me at [leec89@gmail.com](mailto:leec89@gmail.com).

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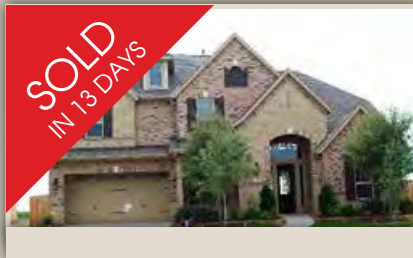
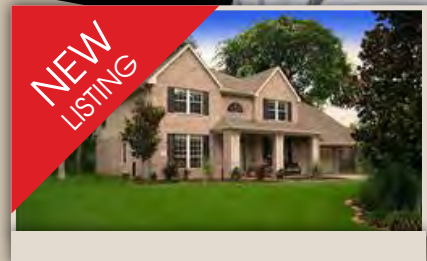
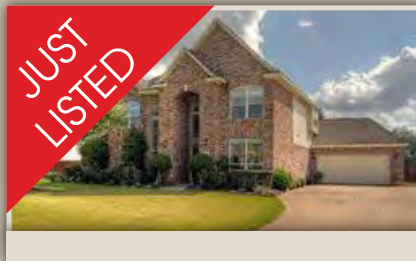
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-Carson Hughes

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-Ashlee Honeycutt

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