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Thank a veteran and military serviceperson every day!

Aransas Pass seniors walk the stage



Jake Claudio poses with family members for a photo outside the Aransas Pass Civic Center after Friday's graduation ceremony. (John Verser/Progress photo)



Valedictorian Sarina Bhakta leads the recessional at the conclusion of Friday's APHS graduation ceremony. (John Verser/Progress photo)

APISD could save thousands on bus repairs

By John Verser
For the Progress

The Aransas Pass ISD board of trustees approved bus repairs and heard an update on the district's career and technology education program at Monday's regularly called meeting.

Bryan O'Bryant, the APISD director of maintenance and transportation, said the district will spend \$33,700 to have a non-functioning bus repaired by the Ellis bus repair facility, which is the state prison in Huntsville. He said the repair includes a new motor, transmission and more, and will cost a fraction of the normal cost. The bus is due to be back before school starts in August.

"The numbers there are significantly lower than you would find at a typical repair shop," he said.

The repairs also come with a two-year warranty.

O'Bryant said the last new bus the district priced was two years ago, and it would have cost \$91,800. He added that price was contingent on buying three busses.

"I'm hoping it will be a good investment for the district," he said.

O'Bryant said there is \$100,000 budgeted for bus repairs. The district plans to send another bus for repairs there shortly, and could send another two for repairs next year.

"If the work comes back and it's quality work, then I'd recommend continuing working with this group," he said.

Chris Johnson reported that the school district's career and technology has improved by collaborating with area school districts.

"We're working really hard to collaborate better with our surrounding school districts," she said. "We've had a memorandum of understanding, in some places and not with others, so we're working to make that a reciprocal agreement so that as we start sharing kids, if one district's sending more than the other district's receiving, that's an automatic process so if sometime in the year, if we have more kids going to Ingleside or Rockport or if they have more kids coming to us, the way we charge tuition will be congruent."

She said the hope is that every school district in the area will use the same agreement.

Johnson said APISD will send students to Rockport-Fulton for that district's culinary program next year. Rockport-Fulton is in the process of building a commercial grade kitchen to help with that program.

"It's meeting the needs of industry, because TEA has promised us, that with the endorsements, they're going to be measuring us on how well we're serving our region," she said.

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Ashmore, 4 others inducted to CAF hall of fame

By John Verser
For the Progress

Lt. Col. Ben Ashmore flew almost 80 missions in World War II, flew in the Berlin Airlift and served 21 years in the U.S. Air Force.

On Saturday, the late Ingleside resident who died in March was one of five named to the Third Coast Squadron Commemorative Air Force Hall of Fame during a ceremony held at McCampbell-Porter Airport. The ceremony was held at the airport, where the squadron is in the process of moving its museum. It is expected to be open in September.

"I just want to express, on behalf of San Patricio County, how proud we are to have the Maxine Flournoy Third Coast Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force here with us on this airport," Precinct 4 San Patricio County Commissioner Jim Price said.

Ashmore, who was 92 when he died March 30 at his Ingleside home, joined the Army Air Corps at age 17 after convincing

his father to let him enlist. After earning his wings and commission in 1943, he was sent to China, where he joined Gen. Claire Chennault's Flying Tigers. The trip there was not an easy one. When he and 17 others started the trek, they were not sure where they were headed. They were sent to Miami with sealed orders, and then spent over a month hitch-hiking to China.

"We were flying P-40s. That was the sorriest airplane," Ashmore said according to a script read by Dan King of KRIS TV, who served as Saturday's master of ceremonies. "The Japanese could outfly and outmaneuver us, but we could outlive them. The food was terrible. We ate what the Chinese ate. All supplies had to be flown in over the hump, from India over the Himalayan Mountains. We only got ammunition and medical supplies."

The group later flew the P-51 Mustang and turned the theater around. Ashmore's Squadron 26 of the 51st Fighter Group came home with just six men after starting with 18. Ashmore flew 78 missions during his 21 months in China. He earned an Air Medal,



Toni Ashmore, the wife of the late Lt. Col Ben Ashmore, shows off the plaque given to honor him on Saturday. Ben Ashmore was one of five inductees into the Third Coast Squadron Commemorative Air Force Hall of Fame during a ceremony at McCampbell-Porter Airport. (John Verser/Index photo)

a Distinguished Flying Cross and Chinese Air Force Wings presented by Mme. Chiang Kai-shek.

Ashmore was recalled to active duty in 1948, and flew in the Berlin Airlift. He served in the Air Force for 21 years. In 2011,

he received the FAA Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award and flew until he was 90 years old. Ashmore lived in Ingleside for 29 years.

Ram Chavez is a U.S. Army veteran

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Police seek help in theft case

Police last week requested assistance in solving a theft case at the Aransas Pass Walmart.

The incident in question occurred about 7:50 p.m. on May 17 when a male left the store. An Aransas Pass Police Department press release stated one stolen item was recovered by the store's loss prevention staff.

A cash reward could be available if someone can help identify the subject. Contact Sgt. Chris Ramirez at APPD or submit the tip anonymously via Tri-County Crime Stoppers online or by calling 800-245-TIPS (8477).



This man is suspected of theft on May 17 at the Aransas Pass Walmart. Police seek help in identifying the subject. (Contributed photo)



Singing at First Saturday

Aransas Pass native Hilda Lamas performs at the second-ever First Saturday event at the Rialto Theater. The First Saturday event featured specials and sales at downtown Aransas Pass businesses, an art walk and the 'Blues & BBQ' event at the Rialto Theater to cap off the night. The next First Saturday will be held July 5, featuring the Hot Attacks at the Rialto. Up this week at the theater is the start of the play 'Vanities,' which kicks off Friday night. (John Verser/Progress photo)

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