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EL CAMPO
The Pearl of the Prairie

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EL CAMPO**

Get Lost In Fun At New RV Resort

Growing City
Shopping revitalized,
Industry growing

Welcome Newcomers!
Good schools, neighborhoods
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EL CAMPO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & AGRICULTURE

“Creating Prosperity for El Campo’s Business Community”

What We Can Do For You:



TOURISM:

We bring conventions, sales meetings and tourist activities to the El Campo community. Daily Tours Available.

BUSINESS:

We help to create job opportunities by stimulating industrial, commercial and agricultural growth. We also support the improvement of community facilities, such as streets, highways, parks and schools.

NETWORKING:

We provide opportunities for members to network with other business leaders and offer business educational seminars, workshops and luncheons.



CHAMBER SPONSORED EVENTS:

Membership & Awards Gala
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Harvest Breakfast
Hometown Holiday Shop Hop

Carol of Lights Christmas Parade
Christmas Mall
KCS Holiday Express Train Day
Small Business Saturday
Wharton County Health Fair Partner

Wharton County Job Fair Partner
Monthly Business Blenders
Seminars
Workshops
Luncheons



EL CAMPO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & AGRICULTURE

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Features:

- 6** El Campo's Worth 'Czech'ing out
- 7** Get 'Lost' To Find Fun In El Campo
- 11** Town Welcomes All, Explore Options
- 12** Small Town, Lots Of Shopping Options
- 14** City's Economy Thriving
- 27** I-69 Development Brings Hope For Prosperity
- 29** Small Town Life: No Commute and much, more more
- 31** El Campo Dentist Proud To Serve Hometown
- 30** Shop Local Campaign Helps City
- 32** Relocating? Meet Your New School, Community
- 33** RE/MAX Here To Help
- 36** Hospital Expanding To Meet Citizen Needs

ALSO INSIDE:

- 4** Mayor's Welcome
- 5** Chamber Welcome
- 16** Calendar of Events
- 20** City Map
- 22** Dining Guide
- 38** Demographics

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ON THE COVER: The rope swing at El Campo Lost Lagoon is one of the more popular items for youngsters.

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El Campo welcomes you

City offers much to visitors, residents

Welcome to El Campo!

On behalf of the city council for the City of El Campo, I welcome you and are pleased that you have chosen to visit El Campo. As a long time resident and business owner, I have always strived to make El Campo a great place to live, work and visit.

The City of El Campo is full of friendly people and rich history, as the Pearl of the Prairie.

El Campo was formerly known as "Prairie Switch" founded in 1881 as a siding and shipping point on the New York, Texas and Mexican Railroad.

We are very proud of our city. We have a lot to offer, including our excellent city services, our beautiful parks system, an excellent academic system and much more. We were named a Certified Retirement Community through the Texas Department of Agriculture in 2018 and have been recognized as a Scenic City through the Scenic City Certification Program.

With a population of 11,600 and proximity to a major metropolitan area, El Campo is close enough away. We are strategi-

**RANDY
COLLINS**
EL CAMPO MAYOR



cally located on U.S. Highway 59 and Texas State Highway 71.

One of the greatest benefits of El Campo is the lifestyle. Residents enjoy the safety, stability and ease of country living at its finest, knowing that Houston's endless amenities are just an hour away.

We offer wonderful opportunities to shop, dine and explore. I encourage

you to spend time in our downtown. I also welcome you to explore our El Campo Museum of Natural History, which offers a look at how animals are represented in their natural habitats.

Catch a movie at our local theater, try out the slide at our Aquatic Center or a round of bowling at the bowling alley – we have many opportunities for fun for the whole family!

If you are looking for a unique place to eat, sleep and shop, we have you covered. If you are just planning a getaway or a new place to call home, you are always welcome in El Campo.

Enjoy your stay in El Campo!

– Mayor Randy Collins



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Experience El Campo

Revitalized city great place to visit, live

Welcome to El Campo, a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family – and a great city to visit. The El Campo Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture is pleased to present the 2020 Experience El Campo magazine.

Uniquely located at the crossroads of State Highway 71 and U.S. 59, El Campo is 65 miles from Houston, a short drive to the Gulf of Mexico and is the largest city in Wharton County.

A hub for entertainment and “things to do,” the city’s activities include swimming, hunting and fishing to taking in a day of bowling, a trip to the latest movie, shopping, catching a sports game or a day at the museum.

El Campo is well-known for its fabulous eateries, from a hearty Tex-Mex meal to good ‘ole barbecue and kolaches. We have many local restaurants to choose from - you will not go hungry when visiting El Campo!

Our community has recently seen tremendous retail growth, and a new life has been brought to our downtown.

A charming downtown is a wonderful advantage that benefits the entire city. We hope to develop El Campo into a tourism and shopping destination, attracting even more events and opportunities for locals, traveling families and tourists.

With historic buildings, the railroad, our unique murals, Evans Park, the gorgeous downtown architecture and our unique location, there are many advantages already in place. The Chamber looks forward to change, and how our Visitor Center can grow to meet future needs.

Many community organizations host events – parades,

**REBECCA
MUNOS**
EL CAMPO CHAMBER



cook-offs, pancake suppers, dance lessons, fairs and festivals. There is always a community event to support!

The Chamber hosts the annual Prairie Days festival featuring bands, food and craft booths and tons of children’s activities each October. This is just one of the many events that brings our community together. In December, a Christmas Mall is hosted

that brings vendors from near and far for a weekend of holiday shopping.

The El Campo Chamber, founded in 1928, is located in the recently-renovated, original 1926 fire station centrally located in historic downtown. Being in the heart of El Campo provides perfect access and greatly enhances our role as a Visitor Information Center. We are proud to own this building, to have preserved this icon and take part in its revitalization.

There will always be a vision for improvement, and El Campo will stay progressive, meeting the needs of our city and regional area.

With all of the current developments, and ambitious attitude, El Campo will continue to grow, and set and meet goals for the betterment of its community.

The mission of the El Campo Chamber of Commerce is to create prosperity in the El Campo business community. We are 91 years strong and represent more than 500 businesses and organizations.

We encourage you to make use of the Chamber Business Directory and the chamber staff by visiting us at 01 N. Mechanic. I hope you enjoy this Visitors’ Guide, and even more so, enjoy El Campo!

“We hope to develop El Campo into a tourism and shopping destination, attracting even more events and opportunities for locals, traveling families and tourists.”

How much will you need to retire? Let’s talk.

Jalisa L Zboril
Financial Advisor

Cindy L Michael
Financial Advisor

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El Campo: Czech us out today

El Campo and its people proudly claim their Czech heritage, celebrating it with kolaches and the sounds of the “Happy Music” – polka is still heard at most area festivals.

Among El Campo residents, 17.27 percent claim Czech heritage, a tally which earned the city a place in the top 100 Czech communities in the United States, according to the last Zip Atlas review.

El Campo rates 95 on the list with Abbott taking the top ranking in Texas with about 42 percent of its residents claiming Czech heritage. The top town in the nation is Prague, Neb., with almost 60 percent of its residents finding their roots in the old country.



Invested in You and Our Community



At First Financial Bank, we're committed to serving our community and growing together.

With a team that puts customers First, we care about making El Campo a great place to live and work.

First Financial Bank, believing in community, First.



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Dive Into Fun

**El Campo's Lost Lagoon
makes BIG splash**

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El Campo's Lost Lagoon is the place to be, making a name for itself by offering family-friendly fun for RVers. "When guests take a vacation at El Campo Lost Lagoon RV Resort, they come in, set-up and then sit back and relax. Our resort is all about luxury. We are definitely the textbook definition of 'Glamping.' Not only do we offer some unique amenities, but we also love our guests and we treat them like family. Hospitality is a mission for us," said Kenna Lucas, the owner along with husband Stephen.

Set on 40-acres, the 250-slot park prides itself on maintaining standards from expectations on the condition of guests' RVs and the number of access

arm bands given per campsite to ensuring that one guest's fun doesn't cause another's discomfort.

It's a formula that works, James Kendall of Rosharon said. He and his parents came to Lost Lagoon several times during its opening months. "We love it," he said, adding the pool, once dubbed the largest private pool in Texas, is the highpoint.

With a lazy river, multiple waterfalls, water slides, a swim up bar and rope swing, the pool can hold hundreds. Off to the side, the area around the pool includes cabanas available to rent as well as plenty of shaded table seating.

Several times a day, there are kid-friendly activities like a race around the lazy river with little yellow rubber ducks and a chance to say hello to the Lagoon mascot.

"You have to understand. These are RV people. They are very family oriented." said Gigi Lewis, the activity director for Lost Lagoon.



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- Lazy River
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There’s also a basketball court and sand volleyball court for guests’ enjoyment.

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The whole family came once again and were back in the fall. “Why? The wife and the kids love the pool and the campsite is nice. There’s no place around with a pool like this. It reminds me of the pool in a big resort, but it’s not, it’s in an RV park,” he said.

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“So far it’s been pretty awesome,” Robert Brooks of

LaVernia said, adding, “The kids are having a great time and we tried out the hot tub. It wasn’t a bad deal.”

Brooks was there with wife Diana and their two children.

It was a quick trip for them, one where they could enjoy Lost Lagoon rather than hours of traveling. They would be back, he said.

The water obstacle course is one of his children’s favorites as is the rope swing and arcade.

“They ran (the obstacle course) all morning,” he said, as his daughter Jaden leaped from a rocky outcrop using a rope to swing herself over the water landing with a big splash as mom waved. “These kids don’t slow down.”

Up next on the swing? Their son, Jordan, of course.

Brett Temple learned about Lost Lagoon while working in the El Campo area. He brought the family over from Victoria two weekends in a row. “The kids love it,” he said.

With a nine-year-old and another two and a half, Brett said it’s hard to find activities that both youngsters enjoy. “But they love it and the adults think it’s awesome too.”

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and looked it over. Then booked. We were worried about crowd control, but they did a good job of keeping it family friendly,” Brett said.

The staff helped make sure all attendees had a good time, Tabatha said. “They had very good customer service and food service.”

The grill offers burgers and all the other fried foods sure to tempt the kids as well as adults not too interested in counting calories on their holidays. A small store on the grounds offers RV supplies as well as T-shirts and small convenience store items.

“We listen to our customers, do what makes them happy and they come back,” Lewis said.

Lost Lagoon’s only drawback? The pool isn’t heated, so its open only as weather permits.

That makes the fall and winter season’s iffy as far as diving in. But, hey, this is the Texas Gulf Coast and that means “weather permits” could be 362 days of the year. We could have a high temperature of 95 two days before Christmas followed a frost on Christmas morning, 80s on New Years and an ice storm on Valentine’s Day. You just don’t know. Check out it out at eclostlagoon.com.

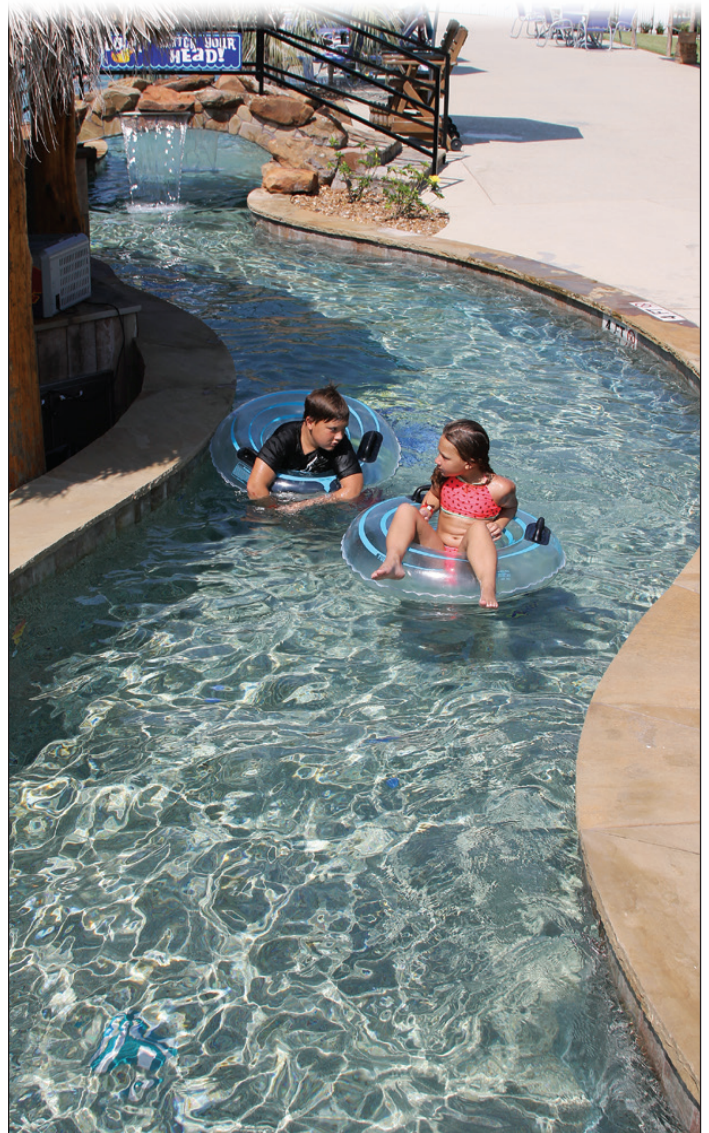
Prices vary depending on the season.

A set of cabins are planned for future years, but so far there are only the two big houses. One sleeps 20 and the other 12. Each requires a minimum two-night stay.

They’ve been booked for wedding showers and other parties, but they’d sleep a large family just fine too. “My husband and I really are blessed for the friendly reception we have received during our first year, from not only the RV vacation enthusiasts, but also the local support of the community,” Lucas said.

Lost Lagoon is still under development with a kiddie pool, putt-putt golf course, dog park and other attractions still to come.

Wi-fi is already available, but no cable TV service connects to the park.



EXPLORE EL CAMPO

'CZECH' OUT PEOPLE,
EVENTS & MUCH MORE



You're more likely to hear "Jak Se Mas" or "Bienvenidos" than Howdy in El Campo, Texas, but it all means about the same – folks are glad you've come and are looking forward to you staying a while.

This is a land where the happy music aka Polka still plays on the local FM station right along with its Spanish language cousin Tejano music. The accordion sound means its time to dance, have a glass of pevo (aka beer) and dive right into the rich culture where church picnics still draw thousands and a call for a helping hand loads semi-trucks or bank accounts.

In El Campo, change comes slow with people's lives revolving still around the fertile soil which drew settlers from Bohemia and Moravia more than a century ago.

The old town square still exists, enjoying a new vitality thanks to the efforts of about a dozen local entrepreneurs.

Most of the attractions are simple: good food, friendly faces, good prices and the slower pace of rural life along with prime dove, teal and goose hunting spots for the sportsmen.

There's always something going on, you can find many of them in the calendar of events starting on Page 16 of this publication and many more can be found in the pages of the *El Campo Leader-News*.

The town features the El Campo Museum of Natural History, located in the El Campo Civic Center, 2350 N. Mechanic.

There's also a city swimming pool with a water slide, dump buckets, spray jets, hot tub and more as well as several municipal parks including the handicap accessible play area at Legacy Park on the West Loop.

But the real selling point for El Campo is its people. It's a town where folks still debate the issues walking down the aisles of the grocery store, where some eating spots are 'pull up a chair and pass the napkins please,' and 'do you need a hand' really means 'do you need a hand.'

El Campo is Spanish for the land, but the town could easily be called Domov or home in Czech. It just feels right.

Come explore and see.

SHOPPING

Small town big on retail offerings



If you've come to El Campo to stay or visit, you'll want to be sure and check out all the incredible and unique stores that'll appease all your shopping needs.

El Campo may be miles from Houston or Victoria, but the businesses here provide quality merchandise and personal customer service you can't get in the big box stores.

Be sure to visit the downtown stores, as well as others sprinkled across our fair town. Plus, there is a great advantage to shopping here as sales tax dollars go back into the community in which businesses in turn support local efforts and club activities.

From the latest styles in clothing, gifts for guys and gals or home necessities and decor, there's a little bit of everything.

In the downtown area, get your day off on the right foot, just grab a cup of "Joe" and a homemade banana nut muffin at Paint Perfections' Coffee Bar and you are set for a day of shopping in our city.

Then be sure to step next door and check out The Mercantile, a store with decor, furniture and accessories. Across the street there's Prairie Rose Emporium with a wide assortment of kitchen and serving items, clothing, coffees, jewelry, accessories and other gift items.

(See EL CAMPO, Page 13)





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Growing

Frontage Road
Development,
I-69 Construction
Signs Of Progress

City's Hopes

Poised for an economic boom with the transformation of U.S. 59 to I-69 and the construction of frontage roads, El Campo's future looks bright – and not just on the highway itself.

Change is coming, officials say, a good change, bringing jobs and prosperity, but managed change that will ensure its traditions remain intact from the waving red "Go Ricebirds" flags to the fundraiser dinners for everything from a family who lost everything to a house fire to flooding in a neighboring town or just a child's field trip.

What makes El Campo stand apart from many other towns in the highway corridor is planning and preparation, City Development Corporation of El Campo Executive Director Carolyn Gibson said.

"The mutual efforts of the City and CDC to expand infrastructure ... greatly enhances the marketability of the property as it is now virtually shovel ready," Gibson said, "adding I-69 frontage roads set for completion in early 2020 opens large amounts of developable land."

But there are no guarantees.

"It is difficult to predict where growth will occur. With the development of frontage roads, and the extension of water and sewer utilities along U.S. 59, we expect business heading along the corridor. We've already seen evidence of this," El Campo City Manager Courtney Sladek said, adding, "Growth is on the horizon. Will larger retail chain development occur in El Campo? We'll have a better answer for that after some of the improvements along U.S. 59."

An RV resort opening on the city's northeast side has already established El Campo as a tourist destination.

"El Campo Lost Lagoon has put El Campo on the map as an RV resort tourism destination with 250 spaces and the world's largest swimming pool at an RV Resort," Gibson said. "They have brought over 10,000 visitors to El Campo (in the first six months operation). That's huge potential, outside of our already existing and flourishing hunting visitors."

The Lost Lagoon effect is expected to inject more than \$5 million per year into the El Campo economy as its guests stay and play – more if they decide to venture outside the resort and actually experience El Campo.

“It is our hope that visitors will see what an amazing community that we have and take advantage of the many wonderful stores and local restaurants,” Sladek said.

The city is already drawing day-trip visitors from the surrounding area visiting the revitalized shopping districts in the heart of El Campo.

A warehouse project offering direct

“Our central location, close to the amenities of Houston and Victoria, allows our residents to enjoy the quality of a rural lifestyle less than an hour from a ‘big city,’”

– Carolyn Gibson
CDC El Campo

rail support via Kansas City Southern Railways is anticipated to have its first operational tenant buildings by early 2021 on the southeast side.

The Southwest International Gateway Business Park is a 540-acre development at the intersection of County Road 421 and U.S. 59.

A 2017 report on the economic impact of the park prepared for the CDC projects 149 jobs to be created by the park within 20 years of its start with \$100 million added to the tax rolls.

Frontage roads, designed for the



I-69 transformation, have all been constructed within the last three years offering prime spots for retail and light industry.

A Marriot-family hotel is already planned on the southwest side and the storefront for El Campo Refrigeration, a company that supplies service statewide to Buc-ees and other well known businesses, is already locating its new site. A new restaurant and other businesses are already locating along the corridor.

“The El Campo community will benefit from the expansion of available retail and service companies in our community,” Gibson said. “Interstate 69 development is most definitely a positive for El Campo. The growth along the I-69 corridor will encourage interstate travelers to stop, shop, stay and eat in El

Campo. This will bring many added customers for our local businesses and benefits El Campo residents by offering a more diverse selection of businesses to frequent.”

City Manager Sladek agreed.

“Development along I-69 is a positive thing for both our citizens and residents for a couple of reasons. First, any growth for the tax roll can lead to a property tax decrease. Second, the development will facilitate growth along one of our major corridors in a planned manner,” she said.

The transformation, Sladek said, will take years, if not decades. The key, she added, is the fact El Campo has and is taking steps to ensure it occurs in a planned manner.

El Campo’s location at almost the mid-point between Houston and Victoria only makes the area more enticing to developers, officials said.

“Our central location, close to the amenities of Houston and Victoria, allows our residents to enjoy the quality of a rural lifestyle less than an hour from a ‘big city,’” Gibson said.

For those living in El Campo, the projections are good.

“If the tax base continues to grow per trend, we will likely see continued decreases in the rates. Additionally, we have seen significant increases in sales tax, which has a direct impact on the tax rate,” Sladek said.

– By Shannon Crabtree





Small town life includes kids & more

Employment can be a necessary evil or extremely fulfilling, depending on the job and the location. And while working in El Campo isn't guaranteed to be a perfect fit for everyone, it does offer a unique set of perks compared to other Texas cities.

"You're right here at home," El Campo Chamber of Commerce President Rebecca Munos said. "When you're on your lunch break or right when you get off you're able to do things that you need to do, and of course you get more time with your family in the evenings by not having to travel."

For most, a commute is part of your daily routine. Traffic has become a notorious cliché for people to complain about while making small talk. Houstonians sit in traffic for almost a year-and-a-half, or 461 days, of their lives, according to data from

"You're not spending the time, the energy ... (on a commute) ... You're here. It makes life a little easier,"

— Rebecca Munos

Educateddriver.org. Working in a small city, such as El Campo, typically means less traffic.

"You're not spending the time, the energy, the money on gas, battling traffic and going in and out of Houston or Victoria or wherever else they may be going," Munos said. "You're here. It makes life a little easier."

Although some of the workers and businesses of El Campo have been around for decades, new businesses and new workers come to the area all the time.

In the last four years, almost 60 businesses were opened in El Campo, have improved their property or are moving to a new property, according to the City Development Corporation of El Campo.

"The community of El Campo is very supportive," Patient

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Care Manager for Houston Hospice Lisa Machen said. "To me, I see that they promote a clean city that has growth as far as they invest in the communities."

Machen manages employees for her company, which is currently hiring in El Campo.

Agriculture plays a large part in the history and economy of El Campo. Originally dubbed Prairie Switch, it was a small camp at a railroad switching point in the late 1800s. After the population grew, El Campo became known for its fertile soil perfect for growing hay, rice, cotton and corn.

In modern day, some of the largest companies in Wharton County are agriculture-related, providing jobs to many living in and around El Campo. According to data gathered by the Agri-Life Extension office, about half of the employed population in Wharton County work in ag-related industries.

Companies in El Campo tend to have relatively low employee turnover.

"Seasonally there are some that hire more, but I know a lot of them where people have some very loyal employees," Munos said.

Working in El Campo means a variety of things. It could mean living minutes from your place of work, or it could mean commuting from a neighboring city.

For the El Campo Houston Hospice office, some employees commute while others live in the area.

"It's just a mix, because we cover such a large area," Machen said. "We do strategically seek out employees, especially nurses, that live in the different communities. Right now we have a nurse that lives in Bay City, we have a nurse that lives in Wharton and we have a nurse that lives here in El Campo."

El Campo native Alfretta Marshall Gary went to school and later taught at Northside Elementary. She now lives in Richmond, where she battles traffic more than she used to in El Campo.

"Compared to what I'm doing right now, (there's) less traffic," Gary said. "The convenience of getting back and forth to work. Getting a nice hot lunch when you want it, versus always having to bring a sack lunch because you don't have time to go make anything to eat for lunch."

As a teacher for El Campo ISD, Gary said she enjoyed every moment of her job.

"I really like the spirit of the town, mainly the school," Gary said. "The school spirit. I like that and the connections the kids can make with that. How the community surrounds and supports the schools."

— By Emily Lincke



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Ross Anderson didn't always know he wanted to be a dentist. But as soon as he decided to pursue the field, he knew he wanted to come back home to El Campo and work in the family business.

"I didn't know 100 percent until my sophomore year, but when it all comes down to it, the decision was to come back with family."



ANDERSON

Anderson, DDS, FAGD, FICOI, became a dentist in 2000, at first working with his father

Charles Anderson who opened the practice in 1972.

Ross took over the practice in 2005, offering everything from general dentistry and orthodontics to oral surgery for all ages.

A special area in his 1106 N. Mechanic clinic offers a place for children to play while they await their appointment while another area is specifically for walk-in service.

"I am proud to be the people's



dentist of El Campo," he said.

Dr. Marielsa Adrianza works with Anderson as part of his La Preferida Dentista service. "She is a Spanish-speaking dentist," Anderson said, adding he too speaks Spanish. The first words he learned? "Abre la boca (open your mouth)," a phrase he uses often in his practice.

The 10-person staff includes one hygienist as well. The clinic treats 20 patients a day on average, but does not accept Medicaid patients.

The goal, he said, is to make sure patients are comfortable. The office

even has Chanel, a "comfort cat," to help those stressed out by a dental visit.

Anderson is a 1993 El Campo High School graduate who earned a doctorate in dental surgery from The University of Texas in 2000. With the degree, he became the youngest practicing dentist in Texas.

"I am a proud father of five boys and two godsons," Anderson said, adding he makes sure his free time is dedicated to them.

A Wharton County resident, he attends First Baptist Church in El Campo and Hope Church in Edna.

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Town's slow pace true luxury

Convenience is a perk to living in a big city. The latest gizmo you never knew you wanted to buy is available at every big box store on the block, and most establishments are open 24 hours in case you have a 2 a.m. craving for sushi.

But do you need to eat raw fish in the middle of the night? What if you settled for a few less options, but were greeted by name every time you entered a restaurant or store?

Take a portion of the big-city's energy and dial it back. Add big helpings of neighborhood hospitality and community pride. You get El Campo, where life is a little bit different.

"We're a very welcoming community, and I think El Campo is special in so many ways in that we all do work together for the greater good, for the greater community," St. Philip Catholic School Principal Gwen Edwards said. "We support each other's efforts."

Community spirit here means supporting the generations before and after yours. No matter how old you get, you are a Ricebird, the beloved mascot of El Campo High School.

"Being a Ricebird is a proud tradition," El Campo ISD Superintendent Kelly Waters said.

This area has several restaurants and shops that have been open for decades. Customers and business owners often greet each other on a first-name basis.

"El Campo is a wonderful place to live," Re/Max Owner and Broker Kacy Bain said. "We have great shopping and schools. We have the luxury of a slower paced life which many people find attractive."

Many regard El Campo and its neighboring community Louise as great places to raise a family.

"I think our community is a community where people still are very respectful," Louise ISD Superintendent Garth Oliver said. "Where kids say 'yes, sir' and 'no, ma'am' and really want to do good collectively for the community."

If El Campo life sounds enticing, contact a local Realtor who can help you find the home that is right for you and your family. There are numerous brokers in the area that can help with rent-

Community working together

ing or buying a property. experienced, honest realtor to assist you," The Real Estate Service broker Melissa Rod said.

People often stay settled in El Campo for generations. It's easy to put down roots.

"As a whole, people just do not leave El Campo because they are happy here," Rod said.

Moving anywhere is a big decision. A lot of variables need to be considered. For all of the upsides to El Campo, there are some downsides. Just like any other place.

"Be patient," Rod said. "Buying a home is more than likely

the largest purchase folks will make. Be selective because it's a lot easier to pay for something you love than something you are not happy with."

If renting is preferable to buying a house, there are eight apartment complexes less than two miles from the center of town.

About 75 single-family homes are available for sale in the area, currently, while about five single-family detached properties

are publicly available to rent, according to Bain.

In order to bring more housing options to the area, the El Campo city council offers rebates for home and apartment builders.

"El Campo is a fantastic place to live, in my opinion," Bain said. "I have lived here all of my life, and know El Campo and the surrounding areas very well."

Students in the area attend public school at El Campo ISD or LISD. St. Philip's offers faith-based education to 3-year-olds all the way through 8th-graders.

Those who choose to attend St. Philip's do not have to be Catholic. The school currently educates about 270 students, who practice a mix of different Christian faiths.

"El Campo is a great place to raise a family," Edwards said. "The educational choices between a Catholic school and public



Broker aims to be best in business

Lead by her passion for helping others, owner of three RE/MAX brokerages Kacy Bain forged a career for herself in real estate 16 years ago after working on her farm and as a stay-at-home mom of two children.

"I always wanted to work for myself," Bain said. "I wanted to do something to help people, but I also had to make some money."

She labored tirelessly while helping people all over Wharton, Lavaca, Colorado, Jackson and Matagorda counties find their perfect properties.

"I enjoy working with the public and getting to know people and creating new friendships through the transactions we do," Bain said.

Bain obtained her license from the Texas Real Estate Commission in 2004. She currently specializes in residential, farm, ranch, vacant land and commercial real estate.

After working as a partner in her independent brokerage, Bain decided to mix things up and work at RE/MAX when a franchise opened in El Campo.

"I liked the business model that RE/MAX has," Bain said. "I knew I wanted to own my own business so it was just a perfect fit for me and what I wanted to accomplish."

Bain worked there for a few years, selling properties all over Southwest Texas. Eventually, she decided to take the next step in her career and purchased the RE/MAX Professionals 2013. Bain now owns

locations in El Campo, Hallettsville and Wharton.

"My mission is to lead, grow and support my agents so they can be top producers and represent their clients at the

ing through financial issues for buyers and sellers, coordinating inspections, appraisals, showings, prospecting etc. It is a lot to juggle but usually worth it in the end."



highest possible level," Bain said. "I have the vision to be the best brokerage in our area with the top agents in the areas we serve."

While Bain loves her job, it does come with challenges.

"Just getting through one transaction takes days and days, sometimes months," Bain said. "Negotiations, work-

Bain's other love is her family. She has been married for 32 years to her husband Keith, and Bain has two children: Amber Miles, 27, and Ethan, 26. Miles and her husband Jacob welcomed Bain's first grandchild into the world in November.

— By Emily Lincke

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The advertisement features a large white silhouette of a house with a chimney, set against a green background. To the left of the house is a white silhouette of a family of four holding hands. In the top left corner is the RE/MAX logo, which consists of a red and blue hot air balloon with the text "RE/MAX" in blue. In the bottom right corner is a photograph of Kacy Bain, a woman with long brown hair wearing a red top and a necklace. The text is arranged in a clear, professional layout, with contact information and the company name prominently displayed.



– Business diversity brings economic growth

(Continued from Page 32)

just has to depend on the families coming in and see what the best fit is.”

To learn more about El Campo students’ educational experience, speak to the school administration. ECISD faculty is willing to help.

“Visit the schools and chat with the staff, both in the office and in the classroom, if you can schedule an appointment with the administration,” Waters said. “El Campo schools have congenial and capable staff members, adept at running things smoothly and handling any issues effectively.”

El Campo ISD currently has 3,624 students enrolled. About 95 percent receive their high school diplomas on time or earlier.

“ECISD is student-centered,” Waters said. “All teachers and staff are focused on delivering the best education.”

Louise, El Campo’s next door neighbor, has a smaller number of students enrolled, with 528 students this year. The on-time or early graduation rate falls in stride with ECISD, at about 96 percent each year.

Smaller class sizes are one of the greatest advantages for LISD students, according to Oliver, along with the dedicated community in Louise.

“I feel really blessed to be a part of it, and to be considered a leader for the dis-

trict,” Oliver said.

Working in El Campo looks different than you might assume for a small town. Picture a farmer plowing their cotton field, a salesperson traveling door to door, a shop owner opening their restaurant for the day. Diverse industries mingle within the city, making up El Campo’s growing economy.

Being informed is important when looking for a job or considering moving. Resources are available to help, such as

the City Development Corporation and the El Campo Chamber of Commerce.

“We work with a lot of people coming into town and new people in town, and we always just hear how friendly El Campo is,” Munos said. “El Campo is very welcoming and it’s just a great environment to work and raise your family.”

Elected officials are willing to talk with people who call or visit. Monthly school board meetings and bimonthly city coun-

Monday - Friday: Lunch 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Saturday: Brunch 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
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Citizens give helping hand when needed

cil meetings are open to the public. There are tons of great opportunities to learn more about the city.

Phyllis Schooler of Richmond moved away from El Campo 15 years ago, but makes time to visit three to four times per month. Her mother and many other family members still live in the area.

"The chamber of commerce as well as the city council and everything, I feel like they care about the city and the people in the city and the well-being of the city," Schooler said. "We're from Texas. We are real friendly in El Campo and welcoming to people."

Living in El Campo her entire life, Gena Labay raised her children here, including her 10-year-old, who is currently a student in ECISD.

"El Campo is a small town community where we're all together," Labay said. "If something happens to somebody, like an illness or a car accident...we drop what we're doing and we ask 'how can we help?'"

A small town feel is coupled with mod-

"El Campo is a small town community where we're all together. If something happens to somebody, like an illness or a car accident ... we drop what we're doing and we ask 'how can we help?'"

– Gena Labay

ern conveniences in El Campo. Tradition is honored while new ways of doing things are allowed to gradually trickle in.

Numerous options for shopping and restaurants are open all over town, sometimes owned by multiple generations of locals or sometimes a big-city franchise. You can see a movie, go bowling or spend some time in the great outdoors.

"I attended school here, and my children attended school here," Labay said. "We have a great school system, lots of

entertainment, recreation places to enjoy."

History is honored by El Campoans. They celebrate their heritage, which for many here is Czech or Hispanic. Festivals with polka and Tejano-style music, such as the Prairie Days festival, offer family-friendly and affordable ways to remember the history of the town.

"A lot of the people across the races, whether it be Caucasian, African American or Mexican American, they pretty well know each other," Schooler said. "They know the families. They grew up together and went to school, so it goes back to that family atmosphere."

The people in El Campo want to get to know you. They are your neighbors, your co-workers and your soon-to-be lifelong friends.

– By Emily Lincke

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Medical care expands to meet community needs

El Campo Memorial Hospital has expanded its facilities and services the past few years, most recently with the addition of the Mid Coast Health Plex as well as health clinics at two local school districts, the nearby junior college and surrounding towns.

"One of our newest endeavors is the addition of the Mid Coast Campus Care locations in the schools," Donna Mikeska, managed care and marketing coordinator at the hospital, said. "The easy access is beneficial to the school staff and many children now have medical access that would likely not get it, so we are providing outreach and filling a much needed gap."

By branching out, the hospital and Mid Coast Medical Clinics are able to meet the demands of patients, especially those unable to drive into Sugar Land or Houston for their health care needs.

"El Campo Memorial Hospital has seen tremendous growth not only in El Campo but in Wharton, Bay City, Louise, Palacios and Blessing," Administrative Assistant Irma Rocha said. "I believe our growth is a testament to the continued support from

the community and the more locations we add the more patients we see."

"El Campo Memorial Hospital continues to grow and extend their services throughout Wharton County and surrounding areas to meet the demands," Mikeska said.

"We are also expanding our services and most recently added a wound care center," added Rocha. "We recruited a full-time interventional cardi-

ologist and added a heart cath lab."

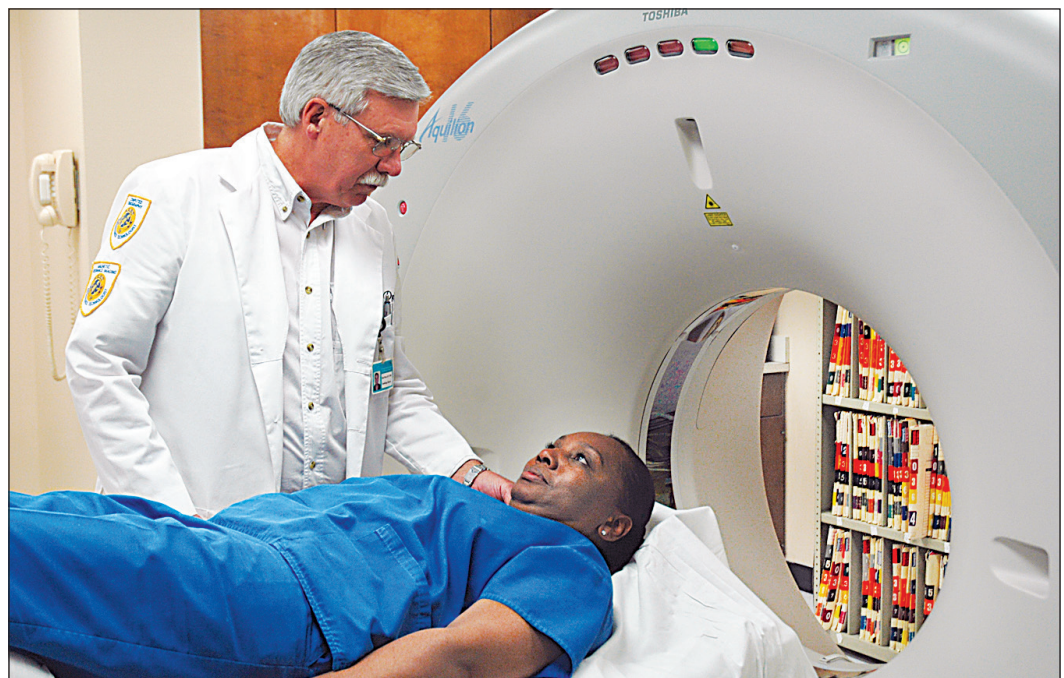
Another expansion, completed a few years ago, is the emergency room, which now has 13 beds.

Plans are now being made for the construction of a three-floor, \$46 million El Campo hospital and expansion of the professional building.

"With the addition of the new hospital we are expanding our services even more

by adding labor and delivery," Rocha said. "There have not been any babies born in El Campo for over 20 years and we are happy that we are bringing this service back."

In early 2019, ECMH received a \$1 million grant from the Moody Foundation to help with the building of a new hospital. The hospital's non-profit board hopes to replace the current 40-year-old facility with the new building.





– Revenue, contributions to fund new hospital

(Continued from Page 37)

The hospital, which opened its doors March 31, 1979, replaced Wharton County's Nightingale Hospital located on East West at Shropshire. That facility, constructed in the 1930s, was out of compliance with national standards when it closed its doors.

According to ECMH Chairman Randy Clapp, hospital revenue, and not tax dollars, will pay for the projects. The board also plans to apply for a USDA loan, as well as raise funds and take in donations.

"The number of patients in all areas ... inpatient, outpatient, clinic visits, lab, X-ray, therapy and so forth, continue to grow each month," Rocha said. "El Campo Memorial Hospital realizes that it needs to provide these services to the citizens of El Campo and surrounding

communities. Many of our citizens are not able to drive out of town for specialized care and we are bringing the services to them."

"While we are a small rural hospital, we are extremely busy and we provide many of the services that you will find in larger hospitals,"

– Irma Rocha
Administrative Assistant

The vision for the new hospital continues as the fundraising campaign continues. According to Mikeska, selections are

underway for a project manager, building contractor and preliminary processes are beginning.

"The first annual fundraiser was held by the El Campo Medical Foundation and raised over \$150,000, which was a great success," Mikeska said. "Additional yearly events and activities will continue to focus on the building project and fundraising awareness."

"I have been working here for over 53 years and am so proud to say that I have never seen this much growth, enthusiasm and excitement concerning the medical care that we provide right here in our own hometown and surrounding areas," Rocha said. "While we are a small rural hospital, we are extremely busy and we provide many of the services that you will find in larger hospitals."



DEMOGRAPHICS

El Campo, Texas is located roughly 65 miles from metro Houston and 55 miles from Victoria on U.S. 59 in Wharton County, Texas.

Incorporated: 1905

Square Miles: 9.05

Population: 11,751

Hispanic: 57.1%

White: 84.5%

African American: 9.5%

Median Age: 34.9

Median Income: \$49,754

El Campo Workforce: 5,753

Unemployment: 2.7%

Educational Attainment:

High school graduates: 35.6%

Some College: 17.9%

College graduates: 16.44%

Higher degree: 4.9%

Households (City & Surrounding Area): 4,269

Average Household Income: \$58,244

Average Home Value: \$140,300

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Wharton County FM&LR ————— 0.04774 per \$100

W. Wharton Co. Hospital District — 0.2216 per \$100

Wharton County Junior College — 0.13934 per \$100

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Emergency Svcs. District #4 (EMS) - 0.06325 per \$100

Coastal Bend Groundwater

Conservation District ————— 0.008 per \$100

TOTAL EFFECTIVE TAX RATE ——— \$2.6398 per \$100

Sales Tax Rate: 8.25%

* Demographic sources include Standard & Poors, City-Data.com, U.S. Census, City of El Campo and El Campo Independent School District.

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- El Campo Bowling Center**543-9999
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302 W. Church

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The Screen Stop578-0465
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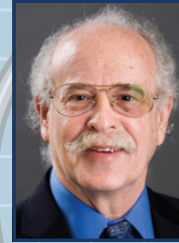
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