COMMUNITYNEWS

COMMUNITY

The YMCA of Austin teaming up to launch the Free Ride to the Y, campaign, coupling a new YMCA student

new YMCA student membership for ages 12-18 with CapMetro's Kids Ride Free program on its buses and trains for all K-12 students. The Y's student membership features a reduced monthly rate of \$25 and no joining fee. Financial assis-tance is available. tance is available.
With a Y member-

With a Y member-ship, young people have access to eight area YMCA of Austin facili-ties plus more than 2,500 Ys nationwide. Central Texas K-12 students, with valid ID, and MetroAccess cus-

tomers younger than 18, are able to use all Cap-Metro service free of charge. Students with-out a valid ID, can visit

out a valid ID, can visit CapMetro's transit store to obtain identifi-cation.

For more informa-tion: austinymca.org/ student-membership.

Courtesy of YMCA of Austin

State funds to address road safety

More than \$5.5 mil-More tnan \$5.5 mir-lion of Austin-area safety-related projects were awarded by the Texas Department of Transportation's 2020 Highway Safety Improvement Program this week to signifi-cantly reduce traffic fa-talities and serious in-

talities and serious in-juries.
Safety lighting will take place on Slaughter Lane from South First Street to Brandt Road, on Howard Lane from Interstate 35 to Dessau Road from I-35 to Round From I-35 to Round From I-35 to Sienal improve-

Signal improve-ments will include conwerting a pedestrian hy-brid beacon to a full sig-nal at South Congress Avenue and Alpine Road and new signals at South Congress and Ramble Lane, at Burle-son Road and Metropolis Drive and at Quick-silver Boulevard and

For more informa-tion: austintexas.gov/ transportation. From news reports

SMITHVILLE

Pre-Juneteenth event Sunday

A Pre-Juneteenth Celebration will take place from 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday at the Smith-ville Recreation Center, 106 Royston St.

The event will include speakers on topics such as impacts and actions on the CO-VID-19 pandemic, what affect the pandemic has had on children's social development and makdevelopment and making high speed internet a priority. The event is free for the first 100 guests to RSVP by call-ing 832-921-9756. Do-nations should be made payable to Joshua Equal Urban Develop-

ment Services, P.O. Box 1531; Bastrop, TX 78602. Courtesy Smithville Area Chamber of Com-

Eateries happy mask mandate lifted



Restaurants in Pflugerville have been updating their face mask rules follo the CDC's announcement of easing the mask-wearing guidance for fully vaccinated people. BRONTE WITTPENN/AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Rebeccah Macias

Restaurants and busi-nesses in Pflugerville have been updating their face mask rules following the CDC's latest guidelines for those fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

The Centers for Dis-ease Control and Prevenease Control and Preven-tion announced last month it is easing the mask-wearing guidance for fully vaccinated peo-ple, allowing them to stop wearing masks indoors, in crowds and in most in-door settings.

Jermaine Dumes, co-

owner at Down South
CaJJun Eats, said he
thinks this is a step in the
right directlon.

"From all the restrictions – close downs, to-go
only and curbside pickup
– and all the things we've
tried to roll with, I think
this has been something
we ve all been waiting for,
Dumes said. "I believe
people will adapt to the
news and lifting the restrictions. Although it will
probably take some time,
I'm excited."

Dumes said the restaurant has dropped its mask
requirement for customers, but will allow them to
wear one if they choose.

wear one if they choose.

"Since we're an out-door venue, moving for-ward we'll probably stop ward we'll prioadly stop wearing masks, but we're not there yet," Dumes said. "We are all so used to it now that I think it will be a big change for us." Pflugerville resident Nyja Anderson said she wears her mask when

picking up her food at res-taurants like Down South

CaJJun Eats. "I think it really just is trinik it really just is up to the person, so I'm comfortable wearing it even though I'm fully vaccinated," Anderson said. "I think I'm doing it more for employees behind the

for employees behind the counter just to make sure everyone else is safe." At the wine and craft beer bar Three Legged Goat, co-owner Jim Mc-Donald decided to lift

mask requirements for both guests and staff. "Once we stopped wearing our masks, peo-ple would come in and see me, my wife or my son without our masks and they would take their mask off, but people would still be coming in would still be coming in with a mask on," McDon-ald said. "Now that most everyone who wants to be vaccinated has been and we're onthe other side, we felt like we should make it (wearing a mask) volun-tary. No one should feel weird about it, nobody is shunning you. It's been over a year and we feel like we're trained to wear over a year and we feel like we're trained to wear masks so when we heard the new guidelines from the CDC, it was exciting and a surprise." McDonald said he plans to leave it optional for employees to choose to wear their mask or not. "Being a small family-owned business, some employees include my

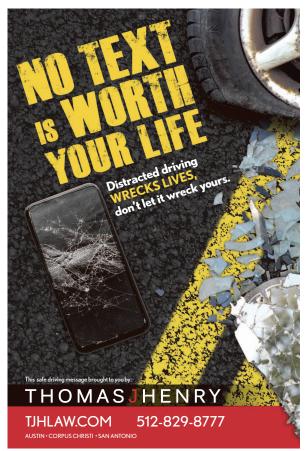
owned business, some business, some business, some power in the company of the co

with."

Denise Stokes, coowner of Pflugerville Nutrition, said it also will no
longer enforce customers
wearing masks inside the
business.

"The staff at this time
will continue to wear
masks for the safety of our
customers and family
members that have not
been vaccinated," Stokes
said. "We will continue to
monitor the situation." monitor the situation

monitor the situation."
However, not all businesses are ready to lift their mask requirements.
Blanca Rodriguez of Stylin' Salon and Spa said it is keeping a masking requirement for now.
"Because so many people still have not been vaccinated, we're just keeping the masks, as of this time, until things play out a little bit," Rodriguez said.



CAPITOL COMPLEX MILESTONES



Jason Beiter, right, vice president at JE Dunn Austin, speaks as leaders from the Texas Facilities Commission celebrate the completion of three construction milestones at Austin's new Capitol Complex; the completion of the site excavation, the relocation of over 27 utilities, and the completion of a new Central Utility Plant. The state is implementing Phase I of the Capitol Complex master plan that aims to save Texans millions in tax dollars by centralizing state agencies on one campus. BRET BROOKSHIRE