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John Robbins 832-280-5815 Jun Gai 281-498-4310

E-mail: News@scdaily.com

Publisher: Wea H. Lee General Manager: Catherine Lee Editor: John Robbins, Jun Gai **Business Manager:** Jennifer Lopez Address: 11122 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77072

Southern News Group

reported

'Pea-sized' hail

in Alvin; Wind advisory

issued for Houston area

Inside C2

Sunday, April 15, 2018

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U.S. says air strikes cripple Syria chemical weapons program

WASHINGTON/BEIRUT (Reuters) - Western powers said on Saturday their missile attacks struck at the heart of Syria's chemical weapons program, but the restrained assault appeared unlikely to shift the course of the 7-year-old civil

The United States, France and Britain launched 105 missiles overnight in retaliation for a suspected poison gas attack in Syria a week ago, targeting what the Pentagon said were three chemical weapons facilities including a research and development in Damascus' Barzeh district and two installations near Homs.

The bombing was the biggest intervention by Western countries against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his superpower ally Russia, but the three countries said the strikes were limited to Syria's chemical weapons capabilities and not aimed at toppling Assad or intervening in the civil

The air attack, denounced by Damascus and its allies as an illegal act of aggression, was unlikely to alter the course of a multi-sided war that has killed at least half a million people.

"We believe that by hitting Barzeh in particular we've attacked the heart of the Syrian chemicals weapon program," Lieutenant General Kenneth McKenzie said at the Pentagon.

U.S. President Donald Trump called the operation a success on Twitter and proclaimed: "Mission accomplished."

However, McKenzie acknowledged elements of Syria's chemical weapons program remain and he

could not guarantee that Syria would be unable to conduct a chemical attack in the future.

In New York, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, said at an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council that Trump told her that if Syria uses poisonous gas again, "the United States is locked and loaded."

At the United Nations, Russia said the U.S.-led strikes would complicate U.N. efforts to broker a political solution to the conflict in Syria.

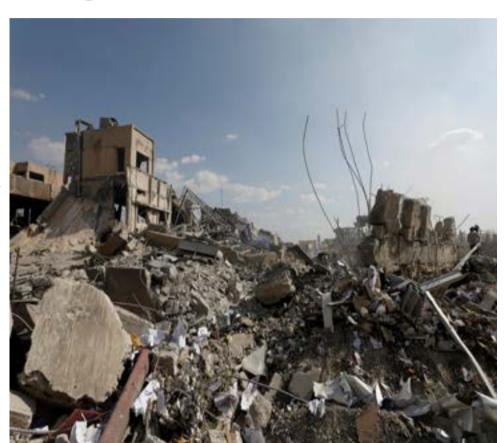
Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said earlier on Saturday that the strikes were "unacceptable and

Syria released video of the wreckage of a bombedout research lab, but also of Assad arriving at work as usual, with the caption "Morning of resilience". Ten hours after the missiles hit, smoke was still rising from the remains of five destroyed buildings of the Syrian Scientific Research Center in Barzeh, where a Syrian employee said medical components were developed.

There were no immediate reports of casualties. Russia had promised to respond to any attack on its ally, but the Pentagon said no Russian air defense systems were used. Syria fired 40 unguided surface to air missiles - but only after the Western strikes had ended, the Pentagon said.

"We are confident that all of our missiles reached their targets," McKenzie said.

The Western countries said the strikes were aimed at preventing more Syrian chemical weapons attacks after a suspected poison gas attack in Douma on April 7 killed up to 75 people. They concluded



The destroyed Scientific Research Centre is seen in Damascus

Assad's government was to blame for gassing the Damascus suburb. British Prime Minister Theresa May described the strike as "limited and tar-

geted", with no intention of toppling Assad or intervening more widely in the war. U.S. Defence Secretary Jim Mattis called the strikes a "one-time shot."

Miller Outdoor Theatre Celebrates its 95th Anniversary Season!

April scheduled performances All performances are always free Fun facts and frequently asked questions at the bottom



HOUSTON -It's Miller Outdoor Theatre's 95th Anniversary Season and there will be activities marking this special occasion throughout the year! Since 1923, Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park has been one of Houston's most beloved cultural treasures, a gathering place for the community and the site of thousands of memorable free performances.

Miller is unique in the United States, offering an eight month season of professional, artistically-excellent and culturally diverse entertainment completely FREE of charge to the public. This is the largest "always free" program of its kind in the country and it attracts hundreds of thousands each season. From daytime programs especially for young children to family friendly evening performances of classical music, jazz, ethnic music and dance, ballet, Shakespeare, musical theatre, popular

concert artists, films and more, this is

HAYA Band: The Migration

April 20 at 8 p.m. http://milleroutdoortheatre.com/ files/3127/HAYA

Band performs Migration, a calm sampling of traditional and contemporary Chinese music.

Founded in 2006, HAYA Band is an award-winning world music collective representing a new era in folk music. The group has won many accolades, including from the China Music Awards (Best World Music Performance) and the Chinese Media Awards. Lead singer Daiqing Tana was recently voted "The Most Beautiful Voice in China."

MIGRATION is about searching for one's own spiritual home, experiencing the beauty of life itself, and returning to a simplistic, survivalist lifestyle. HAYA Band's "Migration" Concert employs

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innovative musical language alongside classic traditional songs, fusing a variety of musical elements such as chants, the Mongolian horsehead fiddle, plucked string instruments, throat singing, and shaman drums. Their music is refined and captivating. Their shows have a distinct "ceremonious" feel. Migration provides us with a path for escape from this fast-paced modern world, a contemporary migration to another realm, one surrounded by the wonders of nature and life.

This is a ticketed event for the covered seating area. Free tickets are available (4 per person over age 16 while they last) at the Miller Outdoor Theatre box office the day of the performance between the hours of 10:30 a.m. -1p.m. If tickets remain at 1p.m., the box office will re-open one hour before show time to distribute the remaining tickets. As always, open seating on the hill. The show goes on

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LOCAL NEWS

'Pea-sized' hail reported in Alvin; Wind advisory

issued for Houston area

By Robert Downen

"Pea-sized" hail was reported in Alvin late Saturday morning as a thunderstorm moved northeastward across Friendswood. A wind advisory is also in effect until 6 p.m. for the Houston and Galveston region, the National Weather Service in Houston said.

IMAGE 1 OF 30 "Pea-sized" hail was reported in Alvin late Saturday morning as a thunderstorm moved northeastward across Friendswood. A wind advisory is also in effect until 6 p.m. for the Houston and Galveston region, the ... more

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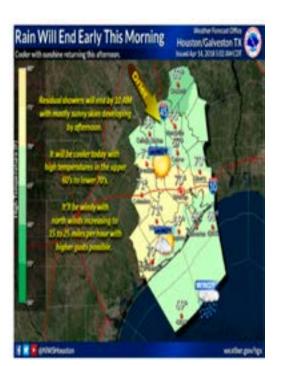
The NWS also issued a warning about elevated fire conditions in the area because of the wind.

Sunday: Sunny, with a high near 71. Northwest wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Sunday Night: Clear, with a low around 50. Northwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming light and variable after midnight.

Monday: Sunny, with a high near 79. South wind 5 to 10 mph.

Monday Night: Clear, with a low around 59. Tuesday: Sunny, with a high near 80. Tuesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 65.





A look back at the devastation caused in Houston by the tax day flood of 2016

While Hurricane Harvey has earned its place among Houston's worst storms, the tax day flood from 2016 should not be overlooked.

The storm, which technically started on April 15, 2016, and lasted multiple days, flooded at least 744 homes and 400 apartments.

"This was truly a remarkable event, one that will be remembered for many years in Southeast Texas," Matt Lanza of Space City Weather wrote on April 26, 2016. "Harris County averaged 7.75 inches of rainfall for the event. That's equivalent to 240 billion gallons of water falling on the area. This exceeded Memorial Day (162 billion gallons) by almost 80 billion gallons of water."







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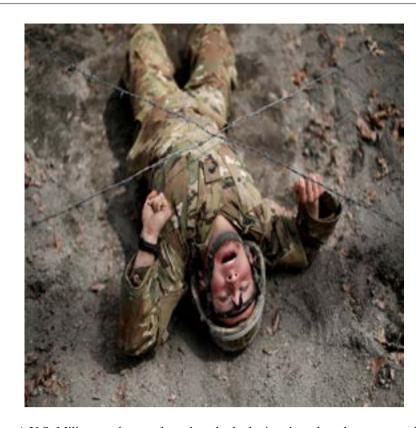
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Sunday, April 15, 2018



Editor's Choice Picturs



A U.S. Military cadet crawls under a barbed wire obstacle as he competes in the 50th annual Sandhurst Military Skills Competition at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York



Russian President Putin attends a joint news confrence with his counterparts Erdogan of Turkey and Rouhani of Iran (not pictured) after their meeting in Ankara



Athletics - Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games - Women's Pole Vault - Victory Ceremony - Carrara Stadium - Gold Coast, Australia - April 14, 2018. Gold medallist Alysha Newman of Canada kisses a Borobi plushie, the games mascot



Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu shakes hands with Iranian Defence Minister Amir Hatami during their meeting in Moscow



Baby elephants play at the David Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage in the Nairobi National Park, near Nairobi



FILE PHOTO: Money changer poses for the camera with U.S hundred dollar bill and the amount being given when converting it into Iranian rials, at a currency exchange shop in Tehran's business district, Iran



Katrina Brooke, aged 73, interacts with Biscuit the robotic dog at Templeman House Residential and Dementia Care Home in Bournemouth



winning the race during the podium ceremony REUTERS/ Max Rossi TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Bundesliga - Bayer Leverkusen v Eintracht Frankfurt



COMMUNITY

<u>Challenger</u> center

HOUSTON [April 12, 2018] - Houston Community College is on a mission to thrill and educate young students in simulated flights to Mars, the Moon and beyond. The flights will blast off at the new Challenger Learning Center, where elementary, middle and high school students will be taught how to apply the STEM subjects of science, technology,

engineering and math to a trip to outer

space.

In February, HCC submitted a formal application to Challenger Center, headquartered in Washington D.C., to open a Challenger Learning Center at the HCC Southeast College Felix Fraga Campus. Approval came late last month, clearing the way for the start of a \$2 million fundraising campaign to support construction of the 10,000 square foot Center.

"We are incredibly impressed with Houston Community College's vision for a seamless STEM pathway that launches students on a trajectory to higher education and 21st century skills. We share both this vision and a passion for inspiring today's youth," said Challenger Center President and CEO Lance Bush. "I congratulate everyone at Houston Community College on this extraor-

HCC To Launch Challenger Learning Center

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

dinary step to provide students in the area with a STEM experience that will spark a passion for learning that lasts a lifetime. We look forward to working together to open the doors of this new Center."

The Challenger Learning Center at

Houston Community College will join

a network of more than 40 Challeng-

er Learning Centers around the globe.

Each Center is a fully immersive ex-

perience, including a Mission Control

Room and Space Station where

students work with hands-on

labs, conduct experiments and

analyze data during a Challeng-

er Center Mission. Students

learn teamwork, communicate

with one another to complete

tasks and solve problems when emergencies arise. Aligned

with national education stan-

dards and informed by real sci-

ence data, Challenger Learning

Center Missions introduce students to

careers in STEM fields and help them

"This will add to HCC's growing in-

novative educational offerings that al-

ready include participation in the city's

build important 21st Century skills.

new innovation corridor in Midtown and partnerships with NASA and the University of Houston to build a Mars surface habitat and other additional facilities for manned missions to Mars." said HCC Chancellor Cesar Maldona-

do. "Today's students are the innovators, explorers and designers of tomorrow. must nurture their excitement inspire their imagination."

> The Felix Fraga Campus, located on 11 acres at 301

in southeast Houston, offers a rigorous

N. Drennan St.

STEM curriculum that includes engineering, maritime logistics, drafting, math, physics and astronomy. It also has an astronomical observatory to serve students and the community.

"HCC is proud to have been selected as the site for the newest Challenger Learning Center," said HCC Board Chair Carolyn Evans-Shabazz. "Houston put a man on the moon and now HCC is adding to Houston's heritage as Space City with this project. This new partnership with Challenger Center is a perfect match made in the heavens."

The Challenger Center

As a leader in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, Challenger Center provides more than 250,000 students annually with experiential simulation-based programs that engage students in hands-on learning opportunities. These programs, delivered in Challenger Learning Centers and classrooms, strengthen knowledge in STEM subjects and inspire students to pursue careers in these important fields. Challenger Center was created by the Challenger families to honor the crew of shuttle flight STS-51-L. Challenger Center for Space Science Education is a United States 501(c)(3) non-profit organization headquartered in Washington, DC. It was founded in 1986 by the families of the astronauts who died in the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster on January 28, 1986.

The organization offers dynamic, hands-on exploration and discovery opportunities to students around the world. These programs equip students with the knowledge, confidence, and skills that will help better our national social and economic well-being. Challenger Learning Centers give students the chance to become astronauts and engineers and solve real-world problems as they share the thrill of discovery on missions through the Solar System. Using space simulation and role-playing strategies, students bring their classroom studies to life and cultivate the skills needed for future success. For more information about Challenger Center, please visit www. challenger.org or connect on Facebook and Twitter.

About HCC

Houston Community College (HCC) is composed of 15 Centers of Excellence and numerous satellite centers that serve the diverse communities in the Greater Houston area by preparing individuals to live and work in an increasingly international and technological society. HCC is one of the country's largest singly accredited, open-admission, community colleges offering associate degrees, certificates, workforce training, and lifelong learning opportunities. To learn more, visit www.hccs.edu.





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BUSINESS

America works: The U.S. unemployment rate is at a 17-year low and layoffs are near the lowest level in 50 years. Jobless claims fall 12,000 to 215,000 and hit lowest level since 1973

U.S. filings for unemployment benefits unexpectedly fell last week to the lowest level since January 1973, further evidence that the labor market remains tight, Labor Department figures showed

The numbers: The rate of layoffs in the U.S. fell again in late March and dropped to the lowest level since 1973. Initial U.S. jobless claims declined by 12,000 to 215,000 in the seven days ended March 24, the government said Thursday. Economists surveyed by MarketWatch had forecast claims to total 230,000.

Jobless claims decreased by 12k to 215k (est. 230k). Continuing claims rose by 35k to 1.87m in week ended March 17 (data reported with one-week lag)

Four-week average of initial claims, a less-volatile measure than the weekly figure, fell to 224,500 from the prior week's 225,000

The more stable monthly average of claims dipped by 500 to 224,500.

The number of people already collecting unemployment benefits, known as continuing claims, rose by 35,000 to 1.87 million.

Economists surveyed by MarketWatch had forecast claims to total 230,000.



What happened: Jobless claims are at the lowest level since January 1973. They fell throughout most of the country last week, with the biggest declines coming in the biggest states: California, Texas, New York, New Jersey and Vir-

The more stable monthly average of claims dipped by 500 to 224,500. The number of people already collect-

ing unemployment benefits, known as

U.S. Jobless Claims Decline To Lowest Level Since January 1973

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Rapid Hiring, Low Unemployment Reflect Strong Labor Market



America works: The U.S. unemployment rate is at a 17-year low and layoffs are near the lowest level in 50 years. Jobless claims fall 12,000 to 215,000 and hit lowest level since 1973

continuing claims, rose by 35,000 to 1.87 million.

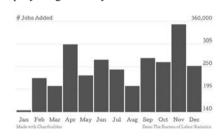
Economists surveyed by MarketWatch had forecast claims to total 230,000.

The latest report contains the annual benchmark revisions that go back five years to 2013. The Labor Department undertakes the process each year to make sure the claims report is as accurate as possible.

The revisions erased the previous low in jobless claims, a reading of 210,000 last month that would have been the lowest since 1969.

But no matter. Layoffs in the U.S. is extremely low, as reflected by a 4.1% unemployment rate that is the smallest in 17 years.

Most companies have enough trouble finding skilled workers to fill open jobs that they are reluctant to see veteran employees go for any reason.



Big picture: The labor market is so strong that it's even drawing back in people who've been out of the workforce for years. And it doesn't show any sign of letting up.

The economy added 313.000 new iobs in February and economists predict another solid gain of around 200,000 in March. The March employment report will be issued at the end of next week. Market reaction: The Dow Jones In-

dustrial Average DJIA, +1.65% and Standard & Poor's SPX, +1.78% rose in Thursday trading. Which would explain why there is still

relatively little upward pressure on prices and salaries. And, means that the Fed may be throwing sand in the gears by increasing rates and cutting supply. Paradoxically, they may also be increasing

inflation. When almost everyone is a debtor, (and the Federal Government is the biggest debtor of all) the cost of money is an ongoing expense item; to be rolled into pricing along with everything else. We look to be on track for an inflationary recession; and with regulatory restraints being eased by lack of enforcement, it will not be mild or short-term. (Courtesy https://www. marketwatch.com)

Kev Takeaways

Claims at the lowest level in 45 years underscore a persistent shortage of qualified workers that has made employers reluctant to fire staff. Applications for jobless benefits below the 300,000 tally are typically considered consistent with a healthy labor market.



U.S. Unemployment Claims Decline To Lowest Level Since January 1973.

Other aspects of the job market remain robust, with payrolls continuing to exceed expectations and an unemployment rate near the lowest since late 2000. Steady employment will help to sustain consumer spending, the biggest part of the economy.

The report reflects the annual revision to seasonal adjustment factors for initial and continuing claims from 2013 to present. (Courtesy www.bloomberg. com)

Additional Highlights

*Prior week's reading was revised to 227,000 from 229,000

*Unemployment rate among people eligible for benefits held at 1.3 percent

*Colorado, Maine and Hawaii estimated initial claims last week, according to the Labor Department (Courtesy https:// www.marketwatch.com)



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