



WORD PASSER

A Monthly Newsletter For The Houston/Galveston Post

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2019

December 4

General Membership Meeting

Keynote Speaker Harris
County Judge Lina Hidalgo

December 11

YMI Ugly Sweater Social Hour

Join SAME at Axelrad

December 12

Joint Society Holiday Social

Join SAME at Saint Arnold
Brewing Company

December 16

Annual Golf Tournament

Join SAME at Black Horse Golf
Course



★ November 6, 2019

General Membership Meeting

Keynote Speakers Maria Pilar Aponte and Roger Lopez with Texas Department of Transportation

★ November 6, 2019

SAME STEM Committee

St. Ambrose Catholic School Houston METRO Rail Operations Center Tour

November General Membership Meeting

By: Pacey Bean

Earlier this year, the Houston area experienced Imelda, a strong tropical storm, that caused urban flooding and damage to the I-10 Bridge over the San Jacinto River. This bridge is a major connection and is a very major issue for Houston's transportation. On November 6, 2019, Maria Pilar Aponte and Roger Lopez, with Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), discussed the process from evaluating the damage, design and construction for the damaged bridge with SAME members at the November General Membership Meeting. TxDOT is actively working on repairing the damage and was open on sharing the information to the public. They hope to have all repairs done by late February 2020.



SAME STEM Committee

Houston METRO Rail Operations Center

St. Ambrose Catholic School 6th Graders

By: Maheshwor KC

On Thursday, November 14, 2019, the SAME STEM Committee, led by Committee Chair **Maheshwor KC**, organized the 6th annual METRO Service & Inspection Facility Tour for 34 sixth grade students from St. Ambrose Catholic School to the Houston METRO Rail Operations Center. **Vincent Sanders, Lead Transportation Systems Planner for METRO**, and **Sandra Strickland, Executive assistant to Scott Grogan, Sr. Director of Rail Operations**, arranged for the students to come and spend half a day learning the behind the scene actions that are done to keep Houston METRO operations running smoothly. The tour started off with a presentation on the history of METRO (The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County) and the goals of METRONext program, which was presented by **Mr. Sanders**. **Mr. Sanders'** presentation began with a description of what transportation in the Houston area was like in the early days with the horse and cart set up and continued up to the current rail system that is running today. Houston METRO has progressed so much over the years that they are rated one of the best transit system in the country. **Mr. Sanders** focused on how the students could possibly be a part of METRONext development as future METRO employees and contribute in Houston METRO progress.

Following the METRO presentation, the students were divided into groups of 17 and taken on a tour of the Operations Control Room (Dispatch Center), where **Brian Rosette, Rail Traffic Controller - Operations** explained how METRO monitors the rail cars running through the Houston area. The students were shown how the control operators communicate with the rail drivers and passengers at real-time while waiting at the stations, adjust rail switches to re-route trains around wrecks or problems on tracks, and how to tell if the trains are running on schedule. The students also got an insight on the education and skills one needs to be a control operators.

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After leaving the control room, the students were taken over to the maintenance center. **Antonio Dominguez, Rail Maintenance Trainer** showed the students where they brought the train cars in to do repairs like fix flat spots in the wheels and clean. He also took the students into the operator's area of a train car that was there being repaired and explained to them the set up inside. Once all the tours had been completed, the students gathered together in the conference room and had lunch. Once the students had finished eating, **METRO officials and SAME members** interacted with students on careers they would like to pursue.

The SAME STEM Committee would like to send out a big thank you to the METRO staff, **Vincent Sanders, Sandra Strickland, Brian Rosette, and Antonio Dominguez** for giving the tour, and our **Committee members Maheshwor KC, Scott Cunningham, David Braun and Victoria Dieu** for helping out at the field trip. The SAME STEM Committee will be looking at organizing Houston TranStar Tour in January 2020.

