

CORONAVIRUS

NEUMAN

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season changes, and what ever was driving the virus changes. In some cases, the virus is constantly coming from an animal reservoir over into humans, and when the animals get out of the season, when they stop having babies or something, then it just goes away – burns out, basically.

But now, with a new virus, there is no good way to predict if it's going to end soon or never. So I think we should be careful.

Q: Michael Mina, a Harvard epidemiology professor, has proposed that the U.S. massively roll out fast-acting COVID saliva tests, like one from e25 Bio that gives results in less than 15 minutes. He's suggested that they be used to test everyone before entering a public space.

A: That'd be nice. In China, they've gotten to the point where they've tested all the people, and they still have so many tests that now they're testing all sorts of things. We had a story just this week about how they detected the virus on frozen chicken wings shipped from the U.S. They have enough tests to look at chicken wings!

I would love for the U.S. to be at that point. We are not even close to that point.

Here in Texarkana, you can't get a test even if you know you've been exposed unless you also have symptoms. So we are guaranteed to miss at least 50 percent or so of cases – people who are asymptomatic – and probably we're missing a lot more than that. It's no way to deal with a pandemic.

So I like this idea. Something like this would take national-level coordination and a heck of a lot of funding. That's in the political realm. I don't think this is the only possible answer, but I'm on board. Give me my saliva test!

Q: So it doesn't matter that those cheap fast tests aren't as reliable as the slow ones we do now? If we do lots of tests, it matters less that they're not perfect?

A: Right, because they'll be good enough that you'll catch lots more cases than we're not catching now. So even if a few tests come out wrong, there will be lots of chances to get it right.

It's like herd immunity by testing. You could catch enough of the cases that you could contact-trace back to find all the other ones.

And a person wouldn't take just one of those tests. We'd be taking them over and over. So if it misses your case the first time, it might catch it later.

Q: How do mRNA vaccines work? What are the risks of such vaccines compared to other technologies?

A: Interesting question! So mRNA vaccines work by translation. They give your cells a message to make a particular protein from the virus – in this case, the spike gene.

The question is, where are they going to put that vaccine? In the case of the Moderna vaccine, if I remember right, they inject into a muscle, so they're using your muscle cells as little – I don't know – scapegoats, maybe. They're going to look like virus, and they're going to have a little bit of virus on them or in them, so your immune system is going to come in and punish them. The immune system learns to attack the coronavirus spike protein.

The idea is that because these are muscle cells, they could probably recover. We beat muscle cells



Ben Neuman

Coronavirus researcher Ben Neuman appears on the Coronavirus Chronicle podcast. He says he would like to see the U.S. ramp up test production so more people can be tested more frequently.

up, tear them, all the time. You'll feel sore and tired – lousy – but then it'll go away, and you'll be stronger than ever, or at least somewhat strong again.

With the mRNA vaccines – or at least with the one that's actually released data – there have been a lot of side effects so far. A couple of others are supposedly in clinical trials, but we don't really know what's going on with those.

With the one we know about, the side effects seem to get worse after a second dose. So this is something to watch for as the trials go from the 50 or so people in the first phase to larger populations. Because in a big enough group of people, somewhere there's somebody who's on the precipice of something bad, and the second dose of vaccine may push him over the edge. But mostly that vaccine seems to work. That's the good news.

Q: Is it safe to ride in a car with someone who is not in your circle of safety? And if so, what precautions should you take?

A: As long as you're both wearing masks, I think it's no worse than being in an office where you'll run into somebody in the hall. A short trip is probably a reasonable risk to take, unless the person is coughing a lot, sweating profusely or something like that. In that case, you may want to reconsider that trip.

Q: Would it be OK to talk while you're in the car?

A: Yeah, if you're wearing your masks. A mask isn't 100 percent protective, but masks work really well at low airflow. So it's safe as long as you're not too active – as long as you don't get too excited. Keep that conversation sedate! Boring stuff only, please.

Q: What about sharing an elevator with other people?

A: Definitely wear your mask. I've seen suggestions that you have to stand facing a corner. But really, it's the shared airspace that's going to get you.

Consider taking the stairs if you're not too tired and your legs are OK to do that. That's what I'd do: Stairs are a little more open and much less traveled.

Q: If you're sick, should you worry that your pet might infect other members of your household?

A: The risk is really low. There are so many infectious people walking around in the world today – it's something like 1 percent cumulative in

Texas – that without knowing it, at some point during the day you're probably gonna run into somebody who has the virus, and 50 or a hundred viruses are gonna bounce off your face. That's OK. That's a sustainable level where most of us don't get infected. In the scheme of things, pets are a much smaller worry than people out in the world.

Q: Do you have a sense of how many pieces of coronavirus it takes to infect a person?

A: No, but we have a sense for animals. It takes around 5,000 to infect a ferret. That was to infect something like five out of five ferrets. When they went to half that dose, I think about half the ferrets were infected. It seems that you have to get a pretty healthy dose of virus for it to have a reasonable chance of taking hold.

Q: What would constitute a healthy dose of virus? A nearby sneeze?

A: Yeah, you could definitely pick it up if you're in the splash zone of a sneeze shower. Or near a good cough. Or just breathing in that delicious COVID air for a few minutes, unfiltered.

Q: If someone has no symptoms of COVID, doesn't know of any exposure and has no identified risk factors, should they be tested?

A: In an ideal world, yeah: I want everybody to be tested today, so then we can find all the other cases. It's inconvenient, it's annoying, but whatever: We need to know.

But this is the real world. I'm assuming that in the Houston area right now, they don't yet have enough tests for everybody to go just as a precaution. I would like to see us moving in that direction.

Q: What's the most interesting new COVID research you've seen lately?

A: There are several papers about COVID-sniffing dogs. They have pictures of them in the papers so you can see what a good boy-slash-girl looks like. They're really fast. We don't know what they're picking up, whether they're directly picking up on a protein or some kind of signature due to sickness. And we don't know if they can pick up asymptomatic people.

I'd like to see more of that. We have a lot of dogs in this country. Not all of them are trainable – I own one of that kind – but somewhere out there, there are trainable dogs.


There's also a lot of stuff that's exciting to maybe five people in my field that's totally unrelated to everybody else –

protein structures and how a polymerase works, stuff like that. It's just neat to see the little machines in motion and figure out, "Oh, so *this* is what they do."

My favorite new research – which is going to totally miss every single one of your listeners-slash-readers – is that they found this gigantic pore. It looks like the nuclear

pore. It's a great big six-sided thing. It looks like a six-fingered flower, and it's got a little nub in the center.

When the virus is inside a cell, it makes a little house for itself with a double membrane, like a double Ziploc bag, and it grows inside there. We couldn't figure out why it was growing inside that: It can't get out through



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<h3>Legal Bids & Proposals</h3> <p>NEW CANEY ISD ADVERTISEMNT FOR SEALED PROPOSALS NCISD TECHNOLOGY BUILDING</p> <p>New District Technology Building located at 21480 Valley Ranch Bend Dr. Porter, TX 77365 (Project #024-2015). Proposals are due September 8, 2020, before (2:00pm CDT/CST) in the Conference Rm of the New Caney ISD Facility Planning & Construction Office, Bldg. "E" located at 22784 US Highway 59S, Porter, TX 77365. A Proposal Security in the amount of ten percent (10%) of the proposal amount is required.</p> <p>The Project is a new 15,900 SF facility for the District Technology Department. The Work includes all site work, building construction- S.O.G., structural steel, masonry, veneer & C.M.U.</p> <p>A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held via Zoom Conference Only: on August 26 at 10:00am CDT/CST. Meeting ID: 875 6151 8926, PW: 8BRKRb. Proposal Contract Documents will be available August 17th from the office of the architect (Corgan). Make requests to Paige Russell, paige.russell@corgan.com 20 East Greenway Plaza, Suite 410, Houston, TX 77046.</p> <p>The Contract may be awarded to a proposer per the following criteria: 1. Offeror's submitted base proposal – 50%; Offeror's experience & reputation – 15%; Quality of offeror's good and services – 15%; Offeror's safety record – 2%; Offeror's proposed personnel – 5%; Whether the offeror's financial capability is appropriate to the size and scope of the project – 5%; Offeror's ability to complete project on time – 5%; Offeror's performance in responding to warranty – 3%. The District reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, and the right to negotiate with any proposers after submission of proposals. In addition, the District, at its discretion, may waive any formalities or minor irregularities regarding the proposals.</p>		<h3>Legal Bids & Proposals</h3> <p>REQUEST FOR COMPETITIVE SEALED PROPOSALS</p> <p>CHANNELVIEW HIGH SCHOOL ALICE JOHNSON RENOVATION PROJECT, CHANNELVIEW INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT</p> <p>The Channelview Independent School District will accept Competi-tive Sealed Proposals until 2:00 P.M. on Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at the Channelview Independ-ent School District Educational Support Center, 828 Sheldon Road, Channelview, Texas 77530. A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at 10:00 A.M. at Alice Johnson Junior High. A walk-through of the project site will immediately follow the pre-proposal conference. Proposal Evaluation Criteria are published in the "Instructions to Proposers" section of the proposal documents. Plans and specifications will be released Friday, August 14, 2020, and will be available electronically from Hucks-bee at www.hucks-bee-inc.com/construction/ upon request. The Owner reserves the right to waive any informalities and to reject any or all proposals.</p>		
<h3>Legal Bids & Proposals</h3> <p>Sealed Bid Solicitation #FL03-21 Houston-Galveston Area Council Cooperative Purchasing Program Fleet Services Equipment</p> <p>Pre-Bid Conference: 9/9/2020 @ 9am Response Deadline: 11/12/2020 @ 1pm Public Opening: 11/12/2020 @ 2pm 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX. Per ADA, reasonable accommodation provided with 24 hour prior notice. 713-499-6693 or www.hgacbuy.org for info.</p>		<h3>Legal Bids & Proposals</h3> <p>The Academy of Accelerated Learning, Inc., located at 5300 N. Braeswood, Ste. 8, Houston, Texas 77096 is soliciting bids to provide copiers, multi-function devices and printers, as well as the maintenance of this equipment. This bid shall remain open until Friday, August 28, 2020.</p>		

Legal Bids & Proposals

NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

August 23, 2020

Harris County Community Services Department – Disaster Recovery
13105 Northwest Freeway, Suite 400
Houston, Texas 77054
(832) 927-4700

This notice shall satisfy separate but related procedural requirements for activities to be undertaken by the Harris County Community Services Department (HCCSD).

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or about September 9, 2020, HCCSD will submit a request to the Texas General Land Office (GLO) for the release of Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (PL 93-383) to undertake the proposed project known as the Post Disaster Relocation and Buyout Program (Allen Field) for the purpose of buying out repeatedly flooded homes and businesses and assisting in the relocation of residents and businesses to less flood-prone areas out of the floodplain. The project area encompasses approximately 81 acres on both the eastern and western sides of Homestead Road south of Greens Bayou in the northeastern portion of Houston, Texas (29.91618, -95.300716). The project activities include demolishing structures and restoring parcels to natural conditions compatible with floodwater storage. CDBG-DR funding under GLO Grant # 19-147-002-B490 and HUD Grant # B-17-DM-48-0001.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

HCCSD has determined that the project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file and available for review Monday – Friday 8:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M. at the Harris County Community Services Department, 8410 Lantern Point Drive, Houston, Texas 77054, and online at <https://harrisrecovery.org/>. Hard copies of the ERR may be requested by e-mail at kelli.medbury@csd.hctx.net.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the ERR to HCCSD, which will accept written comments during the hours of 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. delivered to: Ms. Daphne Lemelle, Deputy Director, Harris County Community Services Department, 8410 Lantern Point Drive, Houston, Texas 77054, with "Attention: Post Disaster Relocation and Buyout Program (Allen Field)" in the subject line. Comments also may be submitted via e-mail to kelli.medbury@csd.hctx.net. All comments received by September 8, 2020 will be considered prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Comments should specify which Notice they are addressing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

HCCSD certifies that Ms. Daphne Lemelle, Deputy Director, HCCSD, in her capacity as Certifying Officer consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. GLO's approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities and allows HCCSD to use Program funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

GLO will accept objections to its release of funds and the HCCSD's certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of HCCSD; (b) HCCSD omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by GLO; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to Texas General Land Office at P.O. Box 12873, Austin, Texas 78711-2873. Potential objectors should contact GLO to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

Daphne Lemelle, Deputy Director
Harris County Community Services Department
8410 Lantern Point Drive
Houston, Texas 77054

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