

City Manager Update – 12/1/23

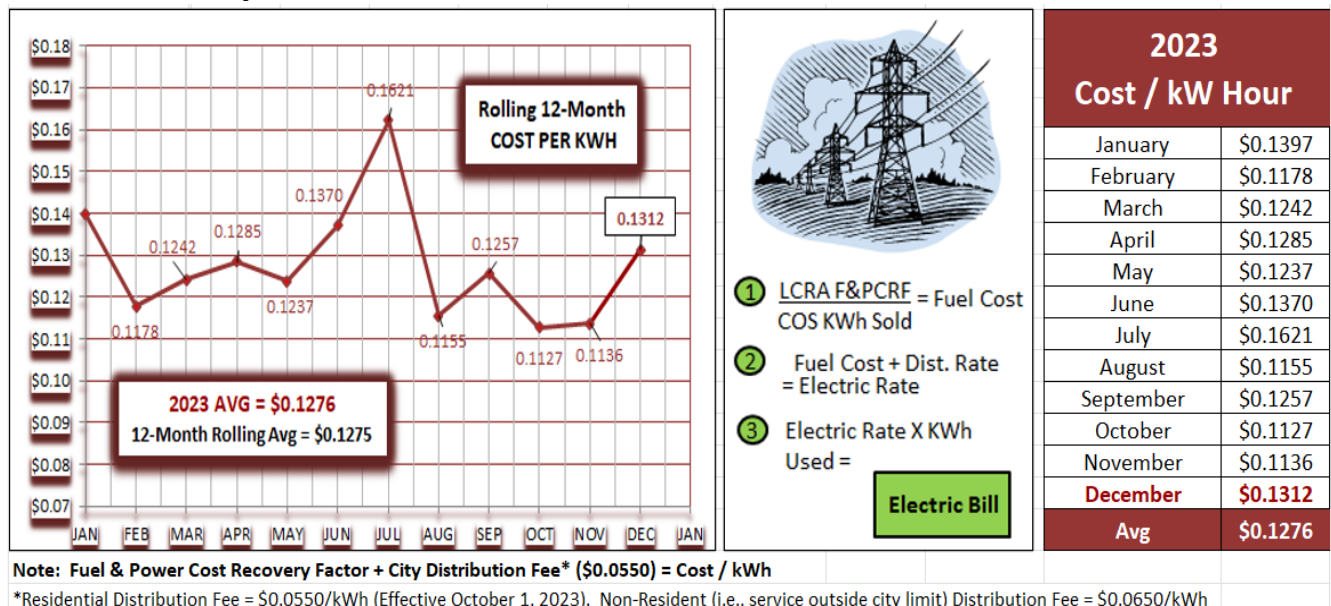
Happy Friday! I trust everyone had a good Thanksgiving. I am amazed that we all spend several days cooking and cleaning to prepare a meal that lasts 27-minutes. It is hard to believe the Holiday Season is already upon us and there are only 24 days left until Christmas. The City staff and work crews have been preparing for Festival of Lights this week with Christmas decorations being put up at the Rec Center, Library, City Hall, and the PD. Special thanks to the Electric Department for hanging banners and re-stringing lights on Main Street and on most City facilities.

During the [Festival of Lights](#) celebration on **Saturday, December 2, 2023**, producers from “[Expedition Texas](#)” will be filming downtown. Each year around the holidays, Expedition Texas takes a break from abandoned buildings and ghost towns to celebrate the communities by telling their stories. Christmas with Expedition Texas puts the spotlight on the traditions that make our Texas town so unique. To kick off our season of Christmas episodes, Expedition Texas will make a stop in Smithville, Texas in an episode that will premiere on TV the weekend of December 9, 2023 and will be available on demand online the following Monday, December 11, 2023.

Here is a list of significant accomplishments, issues, events, and activities since my last update:

- 1) 2024 LCRA “Steps Forward Day” Project Application Submitted** – The City of Smithville submitted our 2024 “Steps Forward Day” project application(s) to the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) for consideration. Volunteers from LCRA will gather on Friday, April 12, 2024, to work on community projects throughout LCRA’s service territory. Examples of potential projects include cleaning parks, painting pavilions, planting trees or doing carpentry work. Last year, LCRA volunteers trimmed trees and cleaned around gravesites at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. LCRA also painted the interior of the restrooms at Riverbend Park. This year (if selected), LCRA volunteers will trim the crepe myrtles on Charleson Blvd and repaint all of the ornamental lights in the downtown area. The city will provide the supplies and equipment necessary to support the project(s) with LCRA providing the manpower (typically 20-25 volunteers). The City of Smithville is fortunate to have LCRA as a community partner. Programs like Steps Forward and the Community Development Partnership Program (CDPP) have definitely made a positive impact.
- 2) Residential Cost Per Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Calculated** - An analysis of LCRA billing data was conducted to determine residential cost per kilowatt hour (kWh) in DECEMBER. Fuel cost per kWh vary month to month and are based upon electric utility generation, transmission, line loss, unmetered sales, and service fees. The fuel cost per kWh for December is \$0.07621. Adding City's distribution fee of \$0.0550, the cost per kWh for residential service in Smithville during DECEMBER will be \$0.1312 per kWh. This represents a **15.52% INCREASE** in the cost per kWh compared to November’s cost per kWh of \$0.1136. The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) of Texas has published cold weather energy-savings tips → <https://www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/facts/Save.aspx>. Below you will find a "rolling" 12-month residential cost per kWh and a fuel cost comparison chart. On average, the cost per kWh for residential electric service in Smithville is between 12-13 cents.

City of Smithville Residential Cost Per kWh – DECEMBER 2023



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- 3) **Wastewater Rates - Three Month Winter Water Averaging Begins December 1st** - Wastewater rates in Smithville are set by using a three (3) month "winter" water use average between DECEMBER and FEBRUARY. You can reduce your monthly wastewater (sewer) bill by conserving water during these months. In the event that the monthly water usage for any month is less than the computed "winter water average," the lesser of the two shall be used as the basis for calculating the wastewater bill. Residential customers pay a \$15.00 sewer base rate per month and \$4.00 sewer fee per 1000 gallons of water used. Cut back on water use between December and February and let the savings begin! For a list of all utility rates in Smithville, click on the following link → <https://www.ci.smithville.tx.us/city-departments/utilities/rates/>.
- 4) **City of Smithville Awarded \$25,000 LCRA Community Development Partnership Program (CDPP) Grant** – The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) awarded the City of Smithville a \$25,000 grant to help cover the cost of a new HVAC system and tinted window for the Lost Pines Artisans Association located at 301 Burleson in the city-owned Mary Nichols Art Center. Several local artists provide classes at the center and musicians meet there to give lessons and record local performing artists. After the new HVAC system is installed, the facility will have better climate control, which will enable it to be open to the public for more events such as artist classes and use of the clay and music studios. The City of Smithville is fortunate to have LCRA as a community partner. Programs like Steps Forward and the Community Development Partnership Program (CDPP) have definitely made a positive impact. Construction / installation of the new HVAC system will begin after the first of the year. Click on the following link for → [LCRA PRESS RELEASE](#).
- 5) **City of Smithville Sales Tax Update** - Below are the sales tax allocations for November 2022 vs. November 2021 (retail sales made primarily in September). This data reflects RETAIL sales of goods and services subject to LOCAL sales tax. Our sales tax payment (receipt) for November was \$62,613. This represents a **2.14% DECREASE** in our net payment compared to the same time last year. Total year-to-date payments are \$866,498 or 2.94% less (\$26k) than 2022. As a reminder, sales tax dollars are used to make street / road repairs and help pay for community services like FIRE and POLICE. Remember...SHOP LOCAL - it makes a difference!!!

Bastrop County Sales Tax Allocation – DECEMBER 2023

County/City	Current Rate	Net Payment This Period	Comparable Payment Prior Year	% Change	2023 Payments To Date	2022 Payments	% Change
Bastrop	1.50%	\$955,780	\$941,605	1.50%	\$12,210,253	\$11,329,866	7.77%
Elgin	1.50%	\$312,955	\$309,195	1.21%	\$3,822,726	\$3,585,696	6.61%
Smithville	1.50%	\$62,613	\$63,985	-2.14%	\$866,499	\$892,813	-2.94%
Bastrop County	0.50%	\$661,586	\$628,617	5.24%	\$6,230,629	\$5,874,030	6.07%

There are several events going on in Smithville and it is going to be a very busy couple of weeks:

The annual **Smithville Volunteer Fire Department (SVFD) Christmas Party** will be held on **Friday, December 1st** at the Pavilion in Riverbend Park. Social starts at 6:00 p.m. with Dinner at 7:00 pm. Councilmembers are welcome and encouraged to attend.

The [32nd Annual Festival of Lights](#) and Indoor / Outdoor Arts & Crafts Fair is scheduled for **Saturday, December 2nd** on Main Street and at the Recreation Center (106 Royston) from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

The **Planning & Zoning Commission** will be meeting on **Tuesday, December 5th** (from 6:00 to 7:00 pm) at Smithville City Hall. Click → [HERE](#) for a copy of the agenda.

The **Smithville ISD Central Office Annual Holiday Luncheon** will be held on **Wednesday, December 6th** from 2:00 - 4:30 pm at the Admin Building (red brick building located at 901 NE 6th St). Councilmembers and the Mayor are invited.

The next **Airport Advisory Board (AAB)** meeting will be held on **Wednesday, December 6th** from 6:00 – 7:00 pm at the Smithville-Crawford Municipal Airport in the Pilot's Lounge.

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Bastrop County Judge Gregory Klaus and the **Smithville Hospital Authority** will be hosting a celebration event on **Wednesday, December 6th** from 6:00 – 7:30 pm to recognize the creation of **Bastrop County Public Health Department**. The event will be held at the Bastrop Convention Center located at 1408 Chestnut Street.

The **City Council** will hold a **Special-Called Meeting / Executive Session** on **Thursday, December 7th** at City Hall (317 Main) to discuss / review the City Manager's FY24 Goals and Objectives. The meeting will begin at 3:00 pm.

The **Smithville Public Library** will be holding their [Annual Open House](#) on **Thursday, December 7th** from 4:00 - 6:30 pm.

The next **City Council Meeting** will be held on **Monday, December 11th** at City Hall (317 Main) beginning at 6:00 pm. Click → [HERE](#) for a copy of the agenda.

The **Annual Chamber Holiday Mixer** will be held on **Thursday, December 14th** from 5:00-7:00 pm at Milton's (206 NW Loop 230). The event is being sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, Pease Custom Floors, LP and Milton's. Councilmembers and the Mayor are encouraged to attend.

The City will be holding a **Holiday Open House** (all day) at City Hall on **Friday, December 15th** ...nothing fancy but we will have cookies, punch, and cider during the day. The public is welcome to attend.

Dickens on Main will be held on **Friday, December 15th** and **Saturday, December 16th** in front of City Hall (317 Main). There will be live music, historical displays, carolers, food, and ice skating. Click on the following link for additional information → <https://dickensonmainsmithvilletx.com/> or visit the [City of Smithville Facebook Page](#) for event flyer.

Below you will find the City of Smithville Holiday schedule. This information has been communicated on our City website, Facebook Page, and inside the November / December Utility Bill in the message section. In addition, we will post notices on the doors of City Hall one week in advance of the scheduled Holiday closure(s).

CHRISTMAS:

- Friday, December 22nd – (Close at Noon)
- Monday, December 25th – Holiday
- Tuesday, December 26th – Holiday

NEW YEARS:

- Monday, January 1st – Holiday

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information. Happy Holidays!!!

-- Robert --

