

City Manager Update – 2/7/20

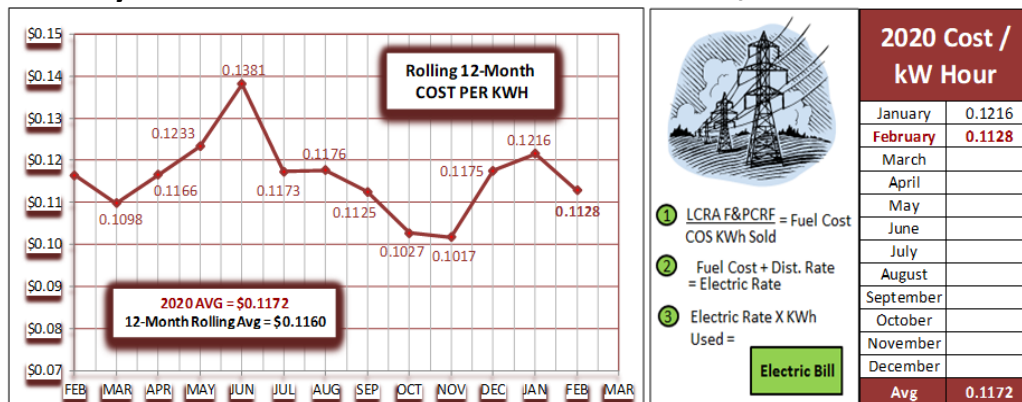
Our heartfelt condolences go out to the family of Harold “Skeeter” Sewart who passed away last weekend after a short but devastating illness. Skeeter was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, friend, and community volunteer. He spent countless hours helping the community and served as the Director of the Smithville Film Commission. He was actively involved in the Chamber, Lion’s Club, Smithville Food Pantry, Smithville Community Gardens, and the W.J. Nixon Masonic Lodge #421. Skeeter made a positive impact on Smithville and all who knew him. The world will definitely be less interesting without him in it. [RIP Skeeter.](#)

With less than a month to go, Smithville is still leading the competition in the “extra small” community category (population < 5,000) for the “IT’S TIME TEXAS Community Challenge”. Liberty Hill and Wilmer are currently in 2nd and 3rd place behind Smithville. Each year, H-E-B sponsors the free, state-wide competition in which Texas communities compete to see which communities can demonstrate the greatest commitment to healthy living. The winning community in each size category will receive an \$1,800 community grant to put toward future health-related efforts, along with a trophy, school district banner, and Governor’s certificate. Approximately 250 community members from Smithville have registered to participate. Thanks to all who are participating in this competition. If you have not yet registered, there is still time to participate → Go to <https://ittcommunitychallenge.com/> to register and join the challenge!

Below you will find a list of accomplishments, activities, issues, and/or future plans since my last report:

- 1) Housing & Urban Development Grant Available for Local Businesses Impacted by Hurricane Harvey** - The U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development through the Texas General Land Office is offering a GRANT program for businesses impacted by Hurricane Harvey. This is a GRANT program and, as such, does not require matching funds and does not require repayment. Texas Back in Business is the \$100 million Hurricane Harvey relief program for Texas small business. Not a bank loan. Not affiliated with the SBA. Texas Back in Business is the jobs and economic revitalization program created to help Texas small businesses damaged by Hurricane Harvey. This could include physical damage to your business, loss of business, loss of employees, etc. Now your small business can apply for grants from \$50,000 to \$250,000. Apply through March 2, 2020 at www.texasbackinbusiness.com or call 844-77-FLOOD.
- 2) Electronics Recycling / Used Tire Collection Event Held** - On Saturday, February 1, 2020, the City of Smithville partnered with the City of Bastrop, Keep Smithville Beautiful, Bastrop County, and Lee County to hold a used tire and electronics recycling event at the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility located at 109 Taylor and SE 2nd Street in Smithville. Over 250 vehicles came through the facility in 3-hours with 1800 used tires, 802 electronic items, (including 113 TVs, 76 computer towers, and 69 computer monitors) dropped off for disposal (SEE PHOTOS). Special thanks to the twenty-nine (29) city, county, and community volunteers who coordinated and worked the event. The next Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection event is scheduled for April 4, 2020.
- 3) Residential Cost Per Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Calculated** – An analysis of LCRA billing data was conducted to determine residential cost per kilowatt hour (kWh) in February. LCRA fuel costs vary month to month and are based upon utility generation, transmission, line loss, and service fees. The LCRA fuel cost per kWh for February is \$0.0628. This represents a **12.19% DECREASE** compared to January’s fuel cost of \$0.0716. Adding the City’s distribution fee of \$0.0500 and LCRA’s \$0.0628 fuel cost, the cost per kWh for residential service in Smithville during FEBRUARY will be \$0.1128. 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 11-12 cents.

City of Smithville Residential Cost Per kWh / LCRA F&PCRF



Note: LCRA Fuel & Power Cost Recovery Factor (See Table Above) + City Distribution Fee* (\$0.0500) = Cost / kWh

*Residential Distribution Fee = \$0.500/kWh. Non-Resident (i.e., service outside city limit) Distribution Fee = \$0.650/kWh Effective October 1, 2019

City Manager Update – 2/7/20 (continued)

4) **Meeting Held with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) to Discuss Live Oak Crossing Issue** - Since November 20, 2019 when the 4th Avenue bridge was closed, the Live Oak Crossing has been blocked by a UPRR stationary train thirty-five (35) times. On January 14, 2020 representatives from Bastrop County, Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), and the City of Smithville met to discuss what measures will be taken (and enforced) to ensure the Live Oak crossing is not blocked by a stationary train in the future. As a result of this meeting, UPRR committed to the following:

- Temporarily change crews north of the rail crossing at Live Oak Street. We will expedite these crew changes to limit the impact on crossings north of Live Oak Street.
- If it becomes necessary to stage a train (i.e. no crew on board), we will do so north of Live Oak Street or cut the Live Oak Street crossing.
- Outbound train crews will "pre-line" switches IF they have immediate dispatching authority to do so. If they do not have immediate authority, the train will need to stop while the conductor lines the switches once they receive that authority. From the outside looking in, it will look like the train is stopped altogether, but it will move in short order.
- Operations Command Center agents will be available to take phone calls 24/7/365. If an emergency arises, they will immediately execute our emergency protocol.
- UPRR will accept and cross reference the blocked crossing data provided. An initial review of the data you provided seems to indicate that most of the logged stoppages were for crew changes and/or lining of switches. Those associated with crew changes should cease altogether, and the lining of the switches will be expedited.
- Provide update to the City Council and community during the **February 10, 2020** Council meeting. Note: Citizens will have the opportunity to address UPRR and the Council during the meeting.

In response to this issue, the City has taken the following actions:

- Established two (2) air ambulance Landing Zones in Mt. Pleasant subdivision.
- Installed signage to "remind" UPRR Engineers not to block Live Oak Crossing.
- Installed signage with UPRR Emergency Ops number to report blocked crossing at Live Oak.
- Published FB notice to communicate UPRR Emergency Ops number to report blocked crossing.
- Met with local land owner to discuss temporary road connecting Mt. Pleasant Ave. (aka "Dump Ground Rd") to Coupland Hill Rd. to allow emergency ingress / egress to Mt. Pleasant subdivision if/when Live Oak crossing is blocked. The property is located outside city limits. As such, details are still being worked out between the land owner and the County.

In summary, I believe all parties understand the urgency and criticality of the situation. TXDOT is doing their best to expedite replacement of the 4th Avenue bridge. The County and City are working with a private land-owner to construct a temporary emergency access road. Measures have been (or are being) put in place by UPRR in an effort to prevent the Live Oak crossing from being blocked by a stationary train in the future. Until the data proves otherwise, I remain cautiously optimistic that these measures will be effective. Going forward, continued collaboration, communication, and execution will be key.

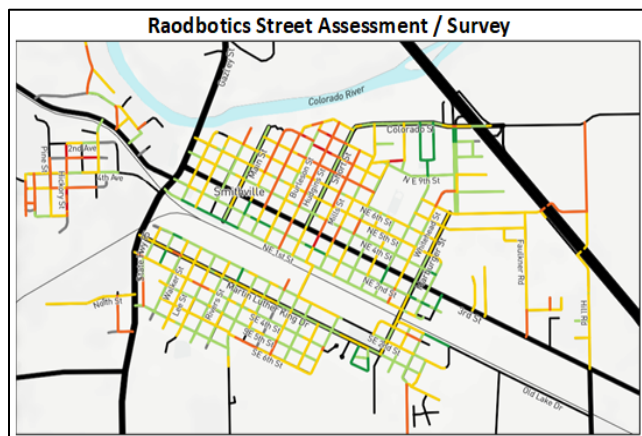
5) **FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant (HMG) DR-4245 - Marburger Drainage Improvement Project Construction Bid Opening** – The bid opening for the Marburger drainage improvement project (HMG DR-4245) was held at 10:00 am on Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at City Hall. As a reminder, the City applied for (and was awarded) a \$140k FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant (HMG) for drainage improvements on and around Marburger Street shortly after the October 2015 flood event. The existing terrain on Marburger and NE 1st Street is extremely flat and numerous homes have flooded over the past several years. The primary means of storm water collection is through a combination of open ditches (there is no curb and gutter in this area) and a shallow underground storm sewer system that feeds into an existing ditch located parallel to the railroad tracks. This ditch begins at Marburger Street and extends east approximately 5,900 feet where it outfalls into Willow Creek. The 1300 linear foot concrete valley gutter we plan to install will provide drainage relief on Marburger and NE 1st street. Five (5) contractors submitted base bids ranging from \$135k to \$275k with **304 Construction, LLC** submitting the lowest bid. The selection of the construction contractor for this project will be on the February 10, 2020 Council agenda. Once a contractor is approved by the Council, BEFCO Engineering, Inc. will prepare the necessary contract documents. We will then hold a pre-construction meeting and issue the notice to proceed with an estimated construction start date of March 27, 2020. The project will take 60-90 days to complete.

Voting Locations: Smithville City Hall, 317 Main St., Smithville / Cedar Creek United Methodist Church, 5630 FM 535, Cedar Creek / Elgin Public Library-Civic Center, 404 N. Main St., Elgin

City Manager Update – 2/7/20 (continued)

- 8) **2018-19 Fiscal Year Financial Audit** – The City completed our 2018-19 fiscal audit on Friday, January 31, 2020. The annual audit was conducted by Singleton, Clark & Company over a four (4) day period. The focus of the audit was on internal financial controls, payroll, HR, accounts payable, accounts receivable, etc. Reconciliation of multiple federal, state, and local grants for infrastructure improvement presented quite the accounting challenge for the Finance Department throughout the year. However, there were no major findings or non-compliances identified. The annual financial audit will be presented by Jack Clark during the March 9, 2020 Council meeting. Outstanding job Cynthia, Tiffany, Brenda, and Jennifer!
- 9) **City-wide Street Assessment and Sign Inventory Completed** - The City of Smithville contracted with Freeland Turk Engineering Group, LLC (FTEG) to conduct a city-wide street assessment and sign inventory. FTEG utilized the [Roadbotics](#) technology to collect street and sign data December 5-8, 2019. The city has approximately 40-miles of city-maintained public roadways and over 600 street signs within the city limits. Roadbotics provides a rating level at approximate 10' intervals along every roadway and assigns a level for each point. Each point is combined along a roadway segment, typically block to block, or intersection to intersection (such as alleys) and the collective segment is assigned an average rating. There are 806 street segments in the Smithville assessment. A description of the ratings along with the percentage of Smithville street segments falling into those categories are described below:
- **Level 1 "Green"** = 1.00 to 1.49 - 3.60% (29 of the 806 segments) were rated Level 1. No or very minor surface damage. This road may be a newly paved roadway.
 - **Level 2 "Light Green"** = 1.5 to 2.49 - 39.95% (322 of the 806 segments) were rated Level 2. Minor surface damage, no critical issues. This road is starting to show typical wear and tear.
 - **Level 3 "Yellow"** = 2.5 to 3.49 - 40.32% (325 of the 806 segments) were rated Level 3. Appearance of pervasive surface distresses. Important surface issues are starting to show.
 - **Level 4 "Orange"** = 3.5 to 4.49 - 12.41% (100 of the 806 segments) were rated Level 4. Significant damage or emerging critical failures. Road damage is beginning to intensify.
 - **Level 5 "Red"** = 4.5 to 5.00 - 1.49% (12 of the 806 segments) were rated Level 5. Major surface damage and/or critical surface failures are present on the road surface.
 - **Not Rated "Gray"** = No Score - 2.23% (18 of the 806 segments) were not rated. Unpaved or dirt roadways will fall into this category. Occasionally, a severely deteriorated paved roadway, or a chip sealed roadway with light colored or brown colored gravel will fall into this category.

Level 4 and 5 rated streets were prioritized and provided recommendations for maintenance activities. City-wide road paving and repair will continue throughout the community this Spring. The roads listed below will be prepped, resurfaced and repaved. The Bastrop County Maintenance Department (who owns the paving equipment) will be doing the work with support from the City of Smithville. We will be giving Main Street a facelift (weather permitting) in mid-October. Pavement cracks will be filled and sealcoat applied. Parking spaces will also be re-stripped. This project will require partial and temporary street closures with notification of area residents and business owners 24-48 hours in advance. Pot-hole repairs will continue throughout town as pot-holes are identified. Citizens can report a pot-hole using the Smithville [SEE/CLICK/FIX](#) link on the City Website or by downloading the SEE/CLICK/FIX SMITHVILLE app to their smart phones.



Street	From / To	Paving Material	Prep Completed	Road Closure	Paving Date
Reed Street	FM2571 to Front Street	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Whitehead	700 Block Whitehead to Charleston	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Tiger Lane	Tiger Lane	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Main Street	NW 1st Street to 8th Street	Sealcoat/Stripe	NO	YES	APRIL
NE 2nd Street	Olive to Main	Sealcoat/Stripe	NO	YES	APRIL
NW 2nd Street	Main to Ramona	Sealcoat/Stripe	NO	YES	APRIL
Gentry Street	Woodress Lane to 300 Block	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Bunte Street	Woodress Lane to 300 Block	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
SE 2nd Street	Taylor to Eagleston	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Byrne	Loop 230 to 500 Block	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Mills	500-900 Block	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Mills	200 Block	Hot Mix	No	YES	TBD
8th Street	Short to Burlison	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
9th Street	Short to Burlison	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
East Street	East Street to FM 2571	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD

City Manager Update – 2/7/20 (continued)

There are several events / activities planned this weekend and the next few weeks in Smithville:

The **Smithville Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet** will be held on **Saturday, February 29, 2020** from 6pm-9pm at the Smithville REC Center. Cocktails and socializing at 6 pm, dinner served at 7 pm with program to follow. This year we will be recognizing the 125th Anniversary of Smithville's incorporation. While Smithville was settled by Dr. Thomas Gazley way back in 1829 when this area was still a part of Mexico, there were many historic events that occurred prior to Smithville's official incorporation as a city in 1895. We are also calling for nominations for Citizen of the Year. Submit your nomination to april.daniels@smithvilletx.org or at the Chamber office at 100 Main Street. Be sure to get your banquet tickets early at www.smithvilletx.org

The **Smithville Chamber of Commerce RIBBON CUTTING @ Riverbend Park** will be held on Sunday, March 1, 2020 @ 2PM to celebrate installation of the new playground equipment! Ribbon cutting at Playscape, ½-K run/walk (yes, not a typo – 0.5-K routes) with Beginner, Intermediate, and "Black Diamond" courses and a costume contest. Stations with fitness and nutrition information, bounce house and other activities for kids. Sponsored by the City of Smithville and the Smithville Area Chamber of Commerce. Special thanks to LCRA and the Smithville Noon Lions Club for providing the funds and labor for the new playground equipment. Register at ittcommunitychallenge.com

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

- **February 10th**, 6:00 pm – City Council Meeting @ City Hall (317 Main)
- **February 12th**, 7:30 am: COFFEE CHAT (Complete Count Census Committee), Olde World Bakery (112 Main)
- **February 14th**: Valentine's Day
- **February 17th**: President's Day. City offices will be CLOSED. Hours will be 8-5 Tuesday to Friday.
- **February 18th**: Early voting for 2020 Primary Election begins.
- **February 20th**: Chamber February Mixer. Co-sponsored by Golden Girls Boutique from 5-7 pm (114 Main).
- **February 21st**: Healing History: Unconscious Bias in the Workplace 6-8 pm at the REC Center (106 Gazley).
- **February 29th**: 97th Annual Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet, 6pm – 9pm, Smithville Recreation & Event Center (cocktail attire) – Tickets at www.smithvilletx.org
- **February 28th**: BEST Breakfast in Elgin @ 8:00 am (location TBD)
- **March 1st**: Ribbon Cutting @ Riverbend Park (2:00 pm)

As a reminder, City Hall will be CLOSED – **Monday, February 17, 2020** in honor of President's Day. Office hours will be 8-5 Tuesday through Friday (Feb 19-22).

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information. Have a great weekend. Stay warm (or warm at heart) and have a Happy Valentine's Day!

--Robert--

Happy
VALENTINE'S
 **DAY**

PHOTOS - 2/7/20

City Employees Working Around Town



4th Avenue Bridge Closed / Live Oak Crossing Blocked by UPRR



Used Tire and E-Waste Collection Event - February 1, 2020



Handicap Parking Spaces Installed @ Riverbend Park

RIP "Skeeter" Sewart

