

City Manager Update – 3/5/21

The City survived the 2021 Deep Freeze despite multiple power outages, water line breaks, email / phone server failures, and a boil water notice. A very special THANK YOU goes out to the City of Smithville public works, utilities, parks and recreation, animal control, dispatch, police, and volunteer fire department for their support during the extreme winter weather event. Fortunately, the City was not subjected to load shedding (rolling blackouts) because we have a hospital (ER trauma center) a municipal airport, and a nursing home. Other communities were not so fortunate and were going through rolling blackouts or were without power for several days. 48.6 % of ERCOT's total capacity was forced offline to meet consumer demand. Load shedding lasted for more than 70 hours. The average real-time price of power was \$6,579.59 / MWh versus \$20.79 / MWh in January. The ERCOT CEO and four (4) board of directors have resigned. Click on the following link for a timeline analysis and summary of actions taken by ERCOT during the winter weather event → http://www.ercot.com/content/wcm/key_documents_lists/225373/Urgent_Board_of_Directors_Meeting_2-24-2021.pdf. It is too early to tell what the final financial impact the increased demand will have upon the City. Preliminary discussions with LCRA (the City's wholesale electric provider) indicate the City will have to pay an additional \$400k in ERCOT generation and transmission fees. This is above and beyond the fuel cost increase we typically see during the peak winter months.

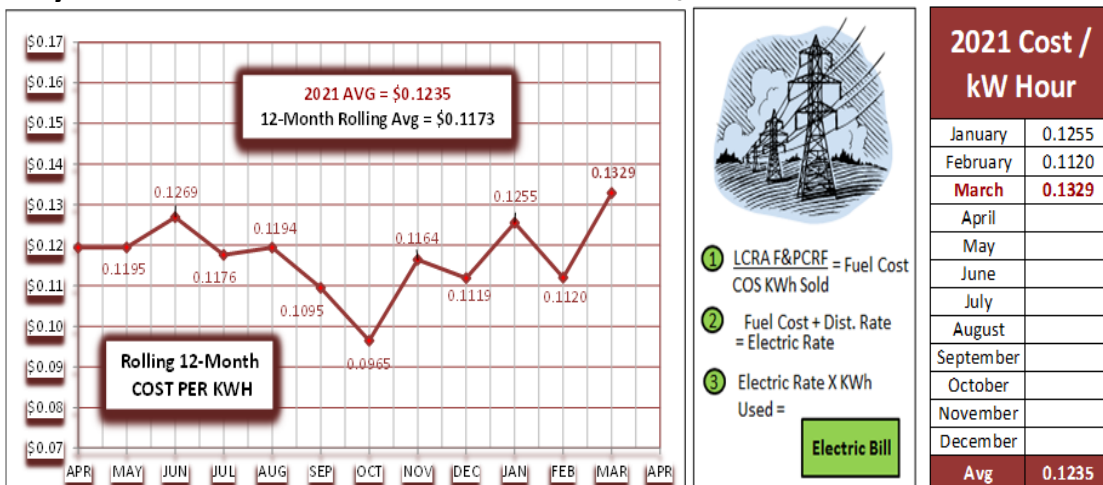
Daylight Savings time will begin on **Sunday, March 14, 2021**. Be sure to move your clocks ahead one (1) hour. "Spring Forward – Fall Back". It's also a good time to check/change out the batteries in your smoke detectors.

Congratulations are in order for all those who participated in the "IT'S TIME TEXAS Community Challenge". Smithville came in 1st PLACE in the "extra small" community category (population between 1-5000) dominating Liberty Hill and Reno logging 273,050 points with 100 community participants. This is the 4th year in a row that Smithville has won the competition. H-E-B sponsored 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 a trophy, school district banner, and Governor's certificate. Unfortunately, the \$1,800 community grant that normally would go to the winners in each category, is not being offered this year. Bastrop and Elgin placed 42nd and 97th in the "small" community category (population between 5,000-40,000) earning 13,300 and 1,250 points respectively. Congratulations! Click on the link for results → <https://ittcommunitychallenge.com/>.

Below you will find a list of accomplishments, issues, and planned activities since my last update:

- 1) Residential Cost Per Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Calculated** – An analysis of LCRA billing data was conducted to determine residential cost per kilowatt hour (kWh) in March. 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 March is \$0.0829. This represents an **33.59% INCREASE** compared to February's fuel cost of \$0.0620. Adding the City's distribution fee of \$0.0500 and LCRA's \$0.0829 fuel cost, **the cost per kWh for residential service in Smithville during MARCH will be \$0.1329**. 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 electric service in Smithville is between 11-12 cents with the average household using 1,200 kW per month at a cost of \$142. However, last month's arctic blast has created a statewide increase in market demand which has significantly raised generation and transmission costs.

City of Smithville Residential Cost Per kWh / LCRA F&PCRF - MARCH 2021



Note: LCRA Fuel & Power Cost Recovery Factor + 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 – 3/5/21 (continued)

- 2) **Governor Abbott To Rescind Mask Order at 12:01 am on March 10, 2021** - Governor Greg Abbott issued Executive Order No. GA-34 on March 2, 2021 relating to the opening of Texas in response to COVID-19. This order is effective as of 12:01 am Wednesday, March 10, 2021, and can be read in its entirety at → [EO-GA-34-opening-Texas-response-to-COVID-disaster-IMAGE-03-02-2021.pdf](#). In summary this executive order does the following:

- Rescinds all COVID-19 operating limits on businesses and other establishments,
- Rescinds the state-imposed face covering requirement,
- Gives the county judge in any county within a Trauma Service Area that has a hospitalization rate over 15% authority to impose limited mitigation strategies,
- Encourages every person and business to use good faith efforts to comply with the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) health recommendations, found at www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus
- Businesses and other establishments retain the right to require employees or customers to follow additional hygiene measures, including the wearing of a face covering,
- Local governments cannot impose restrictions in response to COVID-19 that are inconsistent with this order.

CDC guidelines regarding masks and social distancing are recommended in all City-owned facilities unless hospitalizations in the Trauma Service Area exceed 15% for seven (7) consecutive days at which time masks will again become mandatory.

- 3) **Waste Management, Inc. Solid Waste Contract Renewal and Distribution of 96-Gallon Poly Cart** – The City Council voted unanimously to renew the Waste Management, Inc. solid waste contract on February 8, 2021. The 5-year contract (executed on March 1, 2021) allows for 2X per week service with bulk pick-up once per month (limited to 4-cubic yards) per residential customer. Putting this into perspective, a residential customer can fill up the equivalent of one 40-yard roll-off of bulk per year. One major difference in this contract and the previous contracts is the distribution of a 96-gallon poly-cart (with lid) to every residential customer. There will be no charge to residential customers for the cart. However, each customer must use the new cart. This will result in greater operational efficiency and ensure household trash is contained. The new carts will be delivered to residents on their normal route (pick up day). WMI will also take any old trash cans that residents no longer want if they put an "X" on the can with masking tape or spray paint. Bulk pick-up is for any items that are too large to fit into the 96-gallon poly cart (e.g., rugs, mattresses, old appliances, refrigerators that have freon removed, tables, chairs, etc.). WMI will pick up virtually anything that is NOT construction debris or hazardous materials. Bulk pick-up will be the first Monday/Tuesday of the month. There will be no increase to the \$33.17 residential customers are currently paying for garbage service per month. However, commercial rates for front-load dumpster(s) will increase an average 15-18%. Future contract fee increases will have a 5% annual cap. All garbage routes and service schedules remain the same. Click on the following link for the new rates and additional information <http://ci.smithville.tx.us/city-departments/public-works/>. We are one of the few municipalities that still offers twice per week garbage service, bulk service, AND leaf / limb pick-up service. **NOTE: DISTRIBUTION OF THE 96-GALLON RESIDENTIAL POLY CARTS HAS BEEN DELAYED UNTIL MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2021.**

- 4) **Chamber of Commerce / Railroad Museum Building Project Update** - The new Chamber of Commerce office, Visitor Center, and Railroad Museum is a pier and beam structure located approximately 150 feet (east) from its original location (between the Gazebo and the Gingerbread Man) at the end of Main street. The estimated cost of the new facility is approximately \$175-200k. The cost will be completely funded by insurance, grants, and/or donations. The City of Smithville (Jack Page) is managing the project. Wherever possible, the City is utilizing local trades and service organizations during the rebuilding effort. Despite the arctic winter weather, significant progress is being made. The framing, roofing, and decking are complete. HVAC, plumbing, and electric installation will begin in the coming week(s) followed by interior fit-up and finishing. The Chamber is sponsoring a brick paver fundraising campaign to help raise money to offset some of the cost. Click on the following link for more information about program → <https://business.smithvilletx.org/events/details/chamber-visitor-center-paver-program-6525>. You can also contact the Chamber on (512) 237-2313 for additional information. Please consider donating. Barring any significant weather delays, it is estimated that construction will be completed in the May/June timeframe. (SEE PHOTOS)

City Manager Update – 3/5/21 (continued)

- 5) **2021 City Council, Mayor, and School Board Elections** – Candidate filing for the 2021 City of Smithville / SISD General Election and Special Election is complete. A list of candidates and the position for which they are running is provided below. Election Day is Saturday, May 1, 2021. Early voting begins April 19, 2021 and ends April 27, 2021. Voting will be at City Hall (317 Main Street). See schedule below and/or click on the following link for additional information (e.g., sample ballot, polling locations, etc.) → <https://www.bastropvotes.org/election-information-2/upcoming-elections/>. The Smithville Area Chamber of Commerce will be sponsoring a virtual candidate forum on Tuesday, April 13, 2021. Good luck to all the candidates.

City of Smithville / SISD Candidates For 2021 General Election & Special Election

	Position	Candidate	Term Expires	Election Type	Candidate Status
City of Smithville	Alderman - Place 1	Sharon Foerster	May 2021	General	Unopposed
	Alderman - Place 2	Tom Etheredge	May 2021	General	Challenger
		Betty McBryar			Challenger
	Alderman - Place 3	William Gordon	May 2021	General	Incumbent
		Charles Diltz			Challenger
	Alderman Place 4 (Unexpired Term)	Stan Gerdes	May 2022	Special	Challenger
		Danielle Washington Tenorio			Challenger
	Mayor (Unexpired Term)	Joanna Morgan	May 2022	Special	Incumbent
		Jerry Callaghan			Challenger
SISD	Trustee - Place 3	Nancy Towry	May 2021	General	Incumbent
		Michele Rutherford			Challenger
	Trustee - Place 4	Alan Hemphill	May 2021	General	Incumbent
		Trenton Helmcamp			Challenger

– EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS, DATES AND TIMES –

Smithville City Hall, 317 N. Main St., Smithville, TX

APRIL 19, 2021 - APRIL 27, 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	19 8am – 5pm	20 8am – 5pm	21 8am – 5pm	22 8am – 5pm	23 8am – 5pm	
	26 7am – 7pm	27 7am – 7pm				

– ELECTION DAY POLLING LOCATIONS –

SATURDAY, MAY 1, 2021 7AM-7PM

PLEASE NOTE THAT ON ELECTION DAY A VOTER MUST VOTE AT THE POLLING LOCATION ASSIGNED TO THEIR VOTING PRECINCT.

Smithville City Hall, 317 N. Main St., Smithville, TX

City Manager Update – 3/5/21 (continued)

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

Monday, March 8, 2021 - CITY COUNCIL meeting will be held on at 6:00 pm (via YouTube & Zoom).

Wednesday, March 10, 2021 - Governor Abbott's Executive Order GA-34 becomes effective at 12:01 am

Sunday, March 14, 2021 - Daylight Savings time begins. Set clocks ahead one (1) hour. "Spring Forward – Fall Back".

Wednesday, March 17, 2021 - ST. PATRICK'S DAY!!!

Friday, March 26, 2021 - The monthly BEST BREAKFAST will be held in Smithville at **Your Mom's** located at 109 NW 2nd Street from 8:00-9:30 am.

CITY OFFICES will be **CLOSED Friday, April 2, 2021** in observance of **GOOD FRIDAY**. Office hours will be 8-5 Monday through Thursday (March 29 – April 1).

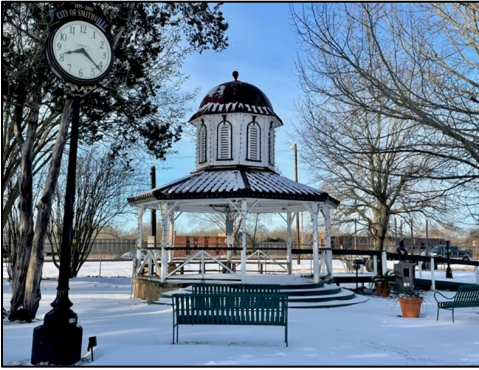
Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information. Have a great weekend!

--Robert--



PHOTOS - 3/5/21

Deep Freeze 2021



Chamber Office, Visitor Center, and Railroad Museum Construction Progress



ADA Compliant Handrail Installation at City Hall

