

City Manager Update – 4/5/19

TGIF! It's been a very busy (and stressful) couple of weeks. Drainage projects, street repairs, grant applications, easement negotiations, financial audits, building permits, parks maintenance, leaf & limb pick-up, phone outages, and the Chamber of Commerce / Railroad Museum fire has kept everyone on their toes. I am very proud of the job all employees do to keep the City running given the recent challenges our community has faced.

Thanks to the heroic efforts of Smithville VFD, Heart of the Pines VFD, and the Smithville PD, approximately 75% of the railroad museum artifacts were saved during the Chamber fire. These artifacts will need cleaning to remove soot and repair damage caused by water and the intense heat. The Chamber of Commerce is accepting donations on the Chamber of Commerce website, www.smithvilletx.org, their Facebook [GoFundMe](#) page, or in person at the temporary Chamber Offices located at 100 Main. Donations can also be made at First National Bank in Bastrop, Smithville or Elgin. Currently, the City is working with the Chamber, Railroad Museum Board, and members of the community to decide whether to rebuild in the same location, expand, and/or relocate the Chamber office, Visitor Center, and Railroad Museum elsewhere in the railroad park. Kudos to the Smithville PD for the arrest of the individual allegedly responsible for the fire. And lastly, a heartfelt THANK YOU to April Daniels (Executive Director of the Smithville Area Chamber of Commerce) for her leadership. April's effort and dedication ensured Chamber operations continued seamlessly since the fire.

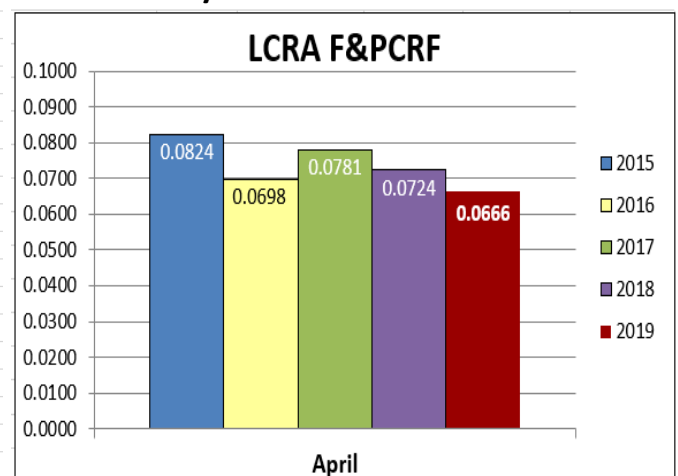
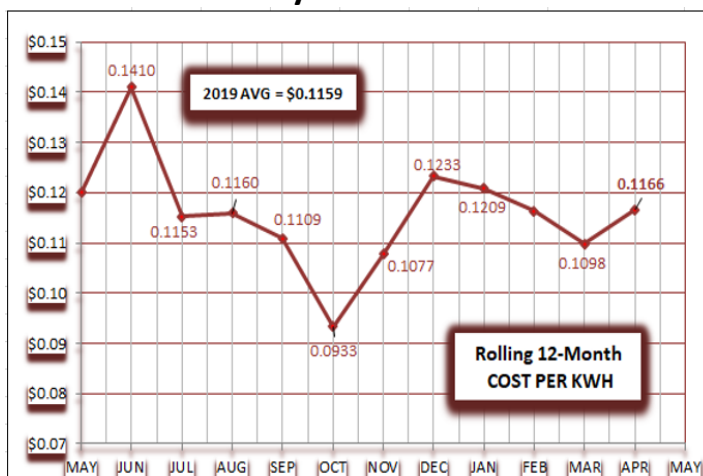
Belinda Castilleja retired on Thursday, April 4, 2019 after **34-years** with the City. Belinda began her employment with the City of Smithville helping out with the collection of City taxes when the billing process was manual. Eventually, she was given the opportunity to move to the Utility Department as a Utility Clerk and has remained there until present. Belinda is very grateful to have met so many people through her years of service and will miss working with all of her co-workers. During her tenure, Belinda worked under five (5) Mayors and four (4) City Managers. She is looking forward to her retirement with her spouse (John), two sons (Adrian & Jeffrey) and three grandchildren (Kingston, Jude and Perrie). Good luck Belinda as you begin a new chapter in life and THANK YOU for over three decades of service to the City of Smithville!

The Nursing Home and Hurta River Estates development projects are progressing nicely. Framing is complete and interior work has begun at the Nursing Home (SEE PHOTOS). The estimated completion date for the nursing home project is November 2019. The Hurta River Estates project is nearing completion. The final plat was approved by the City Council in March. Streetlights have been installed and work has begun on the entryway monument sign. Deed restrictions and Home Owner's Association By-laws have been developed/documented. Approximately 15 lots of the 50-home subdivision have contracts pending with the first set of building plans submitted to the City last week.

Here is a list of accomplishments, issues, and planned activities since my last report:

- 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 April. 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 April is \$0.0666. This represents a **11.39% INCREASE** compared to March's fuel cost of \$0.0598. Adding the City's distribution fee of \$0.0500 and LCRA's \$0.0658 fuel cost, **the cost per kWh for residential service in Smithville during APRIL will be \$0.1166**. Hopefully, with the spring-like weather, citizens will see some relief in their electric bills. 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.

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



City Manager Update – 4/5/19 (continued)

- 2) **2019 LCRA “Steps Forward Day” Project** – Approximately 35 volunteers from LCRA participated in the 2019 Steps Forward Day. “Steps Forward” is an LCRA company-wide day of service where LCRA employees “pay it forward” by volunteering to support community projects throughout the region. Last year, LCRA volunteers painted the concession stand at MLK Park and the Little League Baseball field bleachers. This year, LCRA volunteers painted fifty (50) ornamental light poles on Main Street and NW 1st around the Gazebo area. The volunteers also painted the steps and handicap ramp on the Gazebo. The City is fortunate to have LCRA as a conscientious corporate partner committed to enhancing the quality of life through water stewardship, energy and community service. Programs like Steps Forward and the Community Development Partnership Program (CDPP) have definitely made a positive impact in our community. (SEE PHOTOS)
- 3) **2019 Jamboree Preparations** - Jamboree preparations at Riverbend Park are in full swing. The annual celebration marks the 62nd consecutive year for the Critter → <http://www.jamboreesmithville.com/>. On behalf of the City of Smithville, I would like to extend a THANK YOU to the members of the Jamboree Committee for their efforts. This event takes months to plan and most folks in the community never give a second thought about what it takes to pull off a celebration of this size and duration. Riverbend Park is looking great. Kudos to Jack Page and his team for paying attention to detail and going the extra mile mowing, weed-eating, and trimming trees at Riverbend Park. Jack’s crew will also be removing dirt and debris from the curbs and “gutters” along Loop 230. Some residents and business owners have a habit of leaving grass clippings along Loop 230 after they weed-eat and/or mow. This allows dirt and debris to accumulate over time which inhibits drainage flow and creates an eyesore. Loop 230 will be closed from 1:30 – 4:30 pm on Saturday, April 27th for the Jamboree parade. We plan to put an alert on the City website and FB page communicating the Loop 230 closure and reminding folks about the parade. I know the Jamboree Parade Committee has worked very hard on the parade this year with over eighty-five (85) floats registered thus far. There will not be a City Council car registered in this year’s Jamboree parade. The Mayor and Rhonda will be driving their own cars and Bill will be working the crowd on foot. Bennie and Joanna will be out of town. That leaves just me and I would prefer to watch the parade as opposed to being a sniper target!
- 4) **Miscellaneous Drainage Improvement Projects** - Miscellaneous drainage improvement projects continue throughout town. These are smaller drainage projects than those associated with FEMA. The latest project underway is at 1st and Short Street to enlarge and unclog the drainage inlets and channels which lead to the SE 2nd street drainage system that eventually outfalls to Gazley Creek (SEE PHOTOS). MLK and Lee Street drainage improvements were completed a few months ago. The Webb Street culvert expansion project will begin in May. In the interim, City crews will continue to clear bar-ditches, culverts, and drainage inlets as part of their regular maintenance activity.
- 5) **City-wide Street Repairs and Paving Project** - Preparations are being made to re-pave and repair several streets in our community (see table below). The recent passage of a \$500k Certificate of Obligation for city-wide drainage and road repairs has allowed the City to schedule and fund these infrastructure improvement projects. The City has already removed, pulverized, and rolled the roadway base material (SEE PHOTOS). We are currently working with the Bastrop County Maintenance Department (who owns the paving equipment) to finalize / confirm the paving schedule. 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 app to their smart phones.

City of Smithville Street Repair / Re-Paving Schedule

Street	From / To	Paving Material	Prep Completed	Road Closure	Paving Date
1st Street	Hwy 95 to Olive	Seal Coat	NO	Partial	4/15/2019
2nd Avenue	Live Oak to Hickory	Chip Seal	YES	YES	May / June
4th Street	Marburger to McSweeney	Chip Seal	YES	YES	May / June
Hickory Street	200 Block	Chip Seal	YES	YES	May / June
McSweeney	300 Block	Chip Seal	YES	YES	May / June
Old Uptown Road	Old Uptown Rd to Uptown Drive	Chip Seal	YES	YES	May / June
Olive Street	Loop 230 to 1st	Seal Coat	NO	Partial	4/17/2019
Shade Street	300 - 400 Block	Chip Seal	YES	YES	May / June
Walker Street	500 - 600 Block	Chip Seal	YES	YES	May / June
Webb Street	Willows to End of Street	Chip Seal	YES	YES	May / June
Whitehead	200 Block / 400 - 700 Block	Chip Seal	YES	YES	May / June

City Manager Update – 4/5/19 (continued)

- 6) **CenterPoint Energy Annual Gas Reliability Infrastructure Program (GRIP) Interim Rate Adjustment (IRA)** - CenterPoint Energy is asking the Texas Railroad Commission for a Gas Reliability Infrastructure Program (GRIP) Interim Rate Adjustment (IRA) to their base rate(s). Under Texas law (re: Gas Utilities Regulatory Act), we do not have the ability to oppose the rate increase. However, we can postpone the effective date of the proposed increase for 45-days. The rate will be increased by \$2.04/month for residential service and \$4.13/month for small commercial service. The adjusted monthly charge (base rate) will be \$21.04 and \$29.16 respectively. This represents an average increase of 11-17%. The rate increase will help recover \$37.3M of incremental spending for capital infrastructure improvements in its South Texas Division between October 1, 2017 and December 31, 2018. The proposed IRA will become effective on **May 27, 2019** unless the City chooses to suspend the IRA effective date until **July 11, 2019**. This will be an agenda item for consideration during the April 8, 2019 Council meeting. Additional information is available in your Council packets.
- 7) **2019 General Election Early Voting** - Early voting for the 2019 City of Smithville General Election begins **Monday, April 22, 2019** (see schedule below). Election Day is Saturday, May 4, 2019. Voting will be at City Hall (317 Main Street). No one is running against the current Smithville Independent School District (SISD) Board member incumbents. As such, this election will be for City Council only. Click on the following link for a sample ballot → http://www.bastropvotes.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/REPS_1002.pdf

City of Smithville Voting Schedule for 2019 General Election

APRIL 22, 2019 – APRIL 30, 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	22 8am – 5pm	23 8am – 5pm	24 8am – 5pm	25 8am – 5pm	26 8am – 5pm	
	29 7am – 7pm	30 7am – 7pm				

- 8) **7th Street Detention Pond Project Completed** - I am pleased to report that the 7th Street Detention Pond project is finally COMPLETE! Representatives from Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) met with City officials in Smithville to inspect the 7th Street Detention Pond on March 26, 2019. The detention pond was designed to help mitigate a 10-year storm event which equates to approximately 6.2" of rainfall in a 24-hour period --- or 40 acre-feet (13,100,000 gallons) of storm water runoff. Storm water runoff that is stored in the detention pond will be discharged by pump into the existing drainage system that leads to the river once the storm event has ended and the drainage system has cleared. The total cost of the detention pond and conveyance was \$1.4M with a 75/25 City match (\$350k). Final site work included spraying hydro-mulch around the wet-well pump area, laying Bermuda grass along the 7th Street conveyance, adding protective grates to the 8' x 8' box culvert inlets, and completing the FEMA / TDEM inspection. The final payment and Certificate of Completion will be issued in the coming weeks which will officially close-out FEMA HMG (DR-4223) and (HMG DR-4255). This project began almost 4-years ago after the 2015 Memorial Day Flood. The detention pond will provide much needed drainage relief for the 256-acres on and around 7th Street. Special THANKS to Langford Community Management Services, BEFCO Engineering, FEMA, TDEM, Sheets & Crossfield, 304 Construction, LLC, M&C Fonseca, the City Council, the City staff, George McMahan, James Welch, Jeannie Ralph, and all those who played a role in making this project happen. (SEE PHOTOS)
- 9) **City Implements FirstNet Nationwide Broadband Network for First Responders** - In March, the City Staff and the Smithville PD met with representatives from AT&T and FirstNet to discuss upgrading our current cellular coverage plan. [FirstNet](#) is an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce. Authorized by Congress in 2012, its mission is to develop, build, and operate a nationwide, broadband network to equip first responders with reliable communication service during an emergency or disaster. FirstNet offers several advantages over conventional cellular service. During times of disaster, FirstNet places first responder and government subscribers on a priority network to ensure our PD and VFD have enhanced and reliable cellular capability when it is needed the most. In addition, implementing FirstNet will reduce our current subscriber cost for cellular service by 30% (\$2.5k).

City Manager Update – 4/5/19 (continued)

- 10) **TDA-CDBG Water Line Upgrade Project Update** – Mercer Construction Co., Inc. began construction on a water line upgrade on MLK last month. If you recall, the City received a Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) last year for city-wide water system improvements. The \$300k grant (with 15% match) will be used to construct a 10-inch water line (and associated improvements to include new fire hydrants) that runs from just south of the railroad tracks at Miller Street to the intersection of 4th and Lynch. The larger, looped distribution system will help increase water pressure, water flow, and fire protection on the south side of town. Currently, the largest diameter water line serving the south side is 6-inches. The bore beneath the railroad crossing on Marburger and Miller was completed 2-weeks ago. Mercer Construction is currently tying the 10" water line into the existing water line on 2nd Street. Construction will take 60-90 days to complete. The contract completion date is July 8, 2019. (SEE PHOTOS)
- 11) **15' Public Utility Easement Granted** - Southwest Housing Partners, LTD granted a .188-acre parcel of land to the City of Smithville for a 15' Public Utility Easement adjacent to Eagleston Street. Previously, Southwest Housing Partners, LTD signed a Possession & Use agreement to allow work to continue on the TDA-CDBG water line project described in Item 10 above. Since the City requested the utility easement, and Southwest Housing Partners, LTD conveyed the easement at no cost, we will pay for all surveys and recording fees associated with preparing and filing the legal document. Southwest Housing Partners, LTD owns the newly renovated Independence Meadows Apartments (formerly known as the Smithville Gardens).
- 12) **2019 Safe Routes to School Grant Application** - The Safe Routes to School funding program is again available for communities in Texas. The preliminary grant application is due on Friday, April 12. To prepare for this project, we have released a Survey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/COS_SRTS_2019 -- the survey was open until 3PM April 5), and hosted an Open House/Round Table Discussion on Thursday, April 4. Twelve (12) people attended the event, and provided some great feedback about the project, including David Edwards who represented SISD and updated the group about the new configurations at the Elementary School and the new construction at the Junior High. The group identified the following priorities for funding:
- 6th Street from Marburger to Main
 - 8th from school to Marburger AND Marburger to RR tracks
 - Eastern point of MLK to Eagleston AND Eagleston between MLK and 4th AND MLK up Miller to tracks
 - Bishop to Loop 230 – ask school about re-locating fence to see if community can use it
 - 8th Street from Short to the school
 - 1st from Main to SH95
 - Loop 230
 - 4th Street from Main to SH95
 - Wilkes from Loop 230 and along the school to 9th
 - Main Street from 6th to 1st (only ADA ramps and spot repair)
 - Main Street from 6th to Overlook Park

Tim Saunders (BEFCO Engineering) will provide a preliminary cost estimate and a map with these possible routes, which will be submitted with the preliminary grant proposal. TXDOT will notify applicants on June 18, 2019. The detailed application will be due on August 15, 2019, and the final project awards will be made in December, 2019.

- 13) **City Council Workshop Held to Discuss Tiny Homes and Commercial Vehicle Parking in Right-of-Way** - A City Council Workshop was held on March 28th to discuss "tiny homes" and commercial vehicles and trailers stored/parked within the city Right-of-Way (ROW). More and more tiny homes are coming into our community and we do not have anything in our ordinances that addresses where tiny homes may be placed or the requirements for placement. The consensus from the workshop was to have the City Staff research the issue further and solicit citizen input via survey and/or public forum before deciding if/when/where tiny homes will be allowed. In the interim, a proposed ordinance establishing a 700 ft² minimum single-family dwelling size is being considered. Regarding trailers, our [Code of Ordinances](#) prohibits parking of trailers and commercial vehicles within the city ROW and limits the time a recreational vehicle (i.e., RV's, travel trailers, boats, etc.) can be parked in the ROW to 7-days. Previously, this ordinance was not being uniformly enforced as past Council action (over a decade ago) dictated enforcement on a complaint basis. The consensus from the Council Workshop was to enforce the ordinance as written. Commercial vehicles and trailers cannot be parked in the ROW. Recreational vehicles will be allowed to park in city ROW for a period not to exceed 7-days as long as the vehicles do not cause a line-of-sight issue. Notification will be sent to the community to re-communicate the requirements allowing citizens ample time to comply prior to any enforcement action.

City Manager Update – 4/5/19 (continued)

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

The next **SHOP LOCAL EVENT** “Maker’s & Merchant’s Fair” will be held on **Saturday, April 6, 2019** from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm in the parking lot of EH Mercantile/Subway at 1509 Dorothy Nichols Road – right on HWY 71. Booths are \$10. Merchants who would like to set up a booth can register at www.smithvilletx.org or by calling (512) 237-2313. The Makers & Merchants Fairs are scheduled quarterly at the EH Mercantile/Subway location on June 8th, October 5th and December 14th. For those of you that are participating in the Community-Wide Garage Sale you are also welcome to set up at the same location, just indicate that on your garage sale registration form.

The **SPRING COMMUNITY-WIDE GARAGE SALE** will be held on **Saturday, April 6, 2019** from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. Formerly held just once per year, this event has proven so popular that the Chamber of Commerce has expanded to twice annually. Registration forms and maps can be downloaded at www.smithvilletx.org. The fee is \$10 to participate and get on the map. Approximately 60 residents have already signed up. Maps will also be available on April 5, 2019 at Chamber office. Additional information can be obtained by calling the Chamber on 512-237-2313. If you like garage sales, it will be a good day to find a bargain or clean out your closets and sell old stuff for a profit --- I wonder how we can get sales tax off of this event?!!!

CITY COUNCIL meeting **Monday, April 8, 2019** at 6:00 pm (City Hall). The HEB “It’s Time Texas” Community Challenge recognition event is on the agenda to thank the community for stepping up and participating in challenge.

The next **CHAMBER COFFEE CHAT** will be held on **Wednesday, April 10, 2019** at Olde World Bakery (112 Main Street) starting at 7:30 am. Adena Lewis with Bastrop County Tourism will be presenting information on the many advertising and marketing outreach efforts from the County.

The 8th Annual **SMITHVILLE EMPTY BOWL** will be held on **Saturday, April 13, 2019** (from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm) at the First United Methodist Church. Visit www.smithvilleemptybowl.com for details. Benefits the Smithville Food Pantry, the Smithville Community Gardens, Samella Williams’ Angel’s Unaware Ministries, Lost Pines Artisans Alliance and the Smithville Community Clinic.

The **SMITHVILLE POLICE ASSOCIATION** will be hosting their annual **BLUE BUNNY EASTER EGG HUNT** on **Saturday, April 13, 2019** at 10:00 a.m. The hunt will be at Riverbend Park. Volunteers will be placing approximately 5,000 candy filled eggs throughout the park. New this year, the Easter Bunny will be handing out 50 Easter baskets to some very lucky kids. Hope to see you there!!!!

The **LOCAL CANDIDATE FORUM** will be hosted by the Smithville Chamber of Commerce on **Tuesday, April 16, 2019**. The forum will be held at the Smithville Recreation Center at 6:30pm. The candidates running for City Council in the May 2019 election have all been invited to participate. The public is invited to submit written questions via boxes located at City Hall, the Smithville Public Library or the temporary Chamber office at 100 Main. Questions will be accepted through 5pm on Friday, April 5th. You may also submit questions via e-mail to april.daniels@smithvilletx.org.

I will be attending the **2019 TXDOT AVIATION CONFERENCE** in Galveston, TX from **April 15-18, 2019**. So, Happy Good Friday and Happy Easter in advance!!!

Just a reminder that **CITY HALL** will be CLOSED **Friday, April 19, 2019** in observance of **GOOD FRIDAY**. Office hours will be 8-5 Monday through Thursday (April 15-18).

The **CHAMBER QUARTERLY LUNCHEON** will be held on **Wednesday, April 24, 2019** (from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm) at The First United Methodist Church. County Judge Paul Pape will be speaking. There will also be a silent auction to benefit the Chamber / Railroad Museum rebuild efforts. If you would like to donate please contact the Chamber on (512) 237-2313 or go by their temporary offices at 100 Main Street. Register for the luncheon online at www.smithvilletx.org

The next monthly **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MIXER** will be held on **Thursday, April 25, 2019** (from 5-7:00 pm) at the Family Health Center of Bastrop in Smithville at 1501-B Dorothy Nichols Road.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information. Have a good weekend, a great Jamboree, and a Happy Easter!!!

-- Robert --

PHOTOS – 4/6/18

Belinda Castilleja Retirement - 34 Years w/ the City



2019 LCRA Steps Forward Day - Streetlamp and Gazebo Painting Project



FEMA Inspection of 7th Street Detention Pond



PHOTOS – 4/6/18 (continued)

Small Drainage Improvement Project - 1st and Short Street



Miscellaneous Road Repair / Paving Projects Initiated - (Webb, McSweeney, Walker)



CDBG 10" Waterline Upgrade Project



Nursing Home Construction Progress



600 Short Clean-Up



Riverbend Gabion Wall



SRTS Round-Table

