

## City Manager Update – 5/10/19

Congratulations to Sharon Foerster, Jason Hewitt, and Bill Gordon on their election / re-election to office. Special THANKS to Bennie Rooks and Rhonda Janak for their many years of dedicated service on the Council. Voter turnout for the City election was 15.13% with 378 votes cast out of 2,499 registered voters. It is disappointing that only 15% of our population bothered to vote. The Janak/Hewitt race was separated by 1 vote. Bastrop County elections department could not certify the final election results until 5:00 pm Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup> as they were waiting for one outstanding mail-in ballot. Bottom line --- all votes count and it isn't over until it's over. As a reminder, all political signs on private property must be removed within 7-days after the election per Chapter 14 - Zoning, section 3.7.2. Once the campaign dust settles, I would like to hold a workshop to discuss roles and responsibilities, accomplishments, projects, and future plans. Given all that is going on the next several weeks (e.g., SVFD Annual Fundraiser, SISD graduation, etc.), I am targeting the third week of June for the workshop. I feel the rapport among and between the Council and the City staff has remained strong. Employee morale is high. Sales tax revenues are recovering and the BCAD assessed property values have increased significantly. Infrastructure improvements are being made and new businesses on Main Street continue to thrive and more will be opening soon. We are making progress and building momentum ahead of growth but there is still much to do.

Jamboree was a huge success. This marked the 62nd consecutive year for the Critter and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SHS Class of 1979 graduation. Where did the time go? Kudos to the members of the Jamboree Committee for their efforts. This event takes months to plan and most folks never give it a second thought. Riverbend Park, the Pavilion, and Chuckwagon Square all looked great. Thanks to Jack Page and his team for paying attention to detail and going the extra mile mowing, weed-eating, trimming, and cleaning. We are fortunate to have such a well-maintained “natural” asset for visitors and residents to enjoy.

The rains event(s) over the past week combined with Highland Lakes flood management caused the Colorado river in Smithville to exceed flood stage at 23' on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>. Up Town Drive in Pecan Shores had 2-3 inches of water flowing over the road but no homes were impacted. The 4.00” of rain in the past seven days caused minor flooding in the downtown area on NW 2<sup>nd</sup> street. More rain is expected in the forecast with the heaviest showers and chance of severe thunderstorms coming tomorrow (Saturday) morning around 10:00 am. As such the Annual Fly-In has been CANCELLED.

Here is a list of accomplishments, issues, and planned activities:

- 1) Smithville Police Association (SPA) Blue Bunny Easter Egg Hunt Held** - The Smithville Police Association's (SPA) annual Blue Bunny Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup> was a huge success. Five thousand (5,000) candy-filled eggs were “harvested” from Chuckwagon Square at Riverbend Park in less than 10 minutes! The kids took photos with the Easter Bunny and a good time was had by all. A few lucky kiddos found “money eggs” in the mix that I hide each year. Kudos to the Smithville Police Association (SPA) and all the volunteers who helped assemble Easter baskets and “hide” the eggs. (SEE PHOTOS)
- 2) 2019 Bastrop Central Appraisal District (BCAD) Preliminary Estimate of Assessed Property Values** – The City received official notice from BCAD communicating the preliminary estimate of property value(s) within the City. The total assessed property value (net taxable minus exemptions) for Smithville in 2019 is \$280,590,957. This represents an 12.27% increase (\$30,666,760) over last year's net taxable value of \$249,924,197. This could bring in an additional \$174,494 of revenue to the FY19 General Fund - barring any adjustments given to citizens who protest and win their appeals, added exemptions, etc. which typically equates to a 2-3% reduction of the total assessed value. Final property values (i.e., the certified tax roll) won't be out until the July/August timeframe. These values are what drives the effective tax rate. See table below for the City of Smithville's historical property values and tax rates.

BCAD Property Valuation & City Tax Rate Comparison						
Year	Assessed Valuation	% Change in Value	M&O Rate	I&S Rate	% Change	Total Tax Rate
2019	\$280,590,957	12.27%	TBD			
2018	\$249,924,197	4.63%	\$0.4455	\$0.1235	5.57%	\$0.5690
2017	\$238,861,226	14.15%	\$0.4166	\$0.1224	-4.77%	\$0.5390
2016	\$209,255,193	5.48%	\$0.4276	\$0.1384	2.28%	\$0.5660
2015	\$198,375,435	9.25%	\$0.4075	\$0.1459	0.00%	\$0.5534
2014	\$181,581,421	1.34%	\$0.3990	\$0.1544	9.37%	\$0.5534

## City Manager Update – 5/10/19 (continued)

- 3) **Bastrop County BEST Breakfast Meeting Held** - City and School District representatives from Bastrop, Elgin, Smithville, the Bastrop County Appraisal District (BACD), and several Bastrop County officials met on April 26, 2019 for the monthly Bastrop, Elgin, Smithville, Texas (BEST) Breakfast Meeting at Your Mom's in Smithville. The meeting provided a forum for informal discussion of accomplishments, events, and issues from each municipality and school district within the County.
- 4) **2019 TXDOT Aviation Conference Attended** - The 2019 TXDOT Aviation Conference was held in Galveston, TX during the week of April 15-18. The annual conference is intended for Airport Managers and aviation personnel from around the State. FBO management, marketing, master planning, zoning, airport development, and a review of the latest FAA legislation were the main topics of discussion. The airport manager's round table was also beneficial. Tie-down fees, ground leases, and fuel concession revenues were discussed at length from a legal perspective. One of the highlights of the conference was listening to the keynote speaker --- Aron Ralston. Aron is an American outdoorsman, mechanical engineer, and motivational speaker known for surviving a canyoneering accident by cutting off his own arm. During a solo descent of Bluejohn Canyon in southeastern Utah, he dislodged a boulder which pinned his right wrist to the side of the canyon wall. After five days he was able to amputate his forearm (after breaking two bones) with a dull pocketknife, make his way through the rest of the canyon, rappel down a 65-foot drop, and hike 7 miles to safety. The incident is documented in Ralston's autobiography "Between a Rock and a Hard Place" and was the subject of the 2010 film "127 Hours" where he is portrayed by James Franco. Here is a link to the trailer → [127 Hours](#).
- 5) **Article 12.800 - Parking of Recreational Vehicles, Trailers, and Commercial Vehicles in ROW Amended** - On any given day in our community, there are 75-100 trailers, commercial vehicles, and recreational vehicles (RV's) permanently parked and/or stored in the public ROW that create a safety hazard and in some cases are in disrepair and unsightly. Changes to the ordinance were necessary to address this issue and clarify the conditions for parking in the ROW. As such, the City of Smithville Code of Ordinances Article 12.800, was amended by City Council action on April 8, 2019, to prohibit parking of trailers and commercial vehicles within the public right-of-way (ROW) for more than 24-hours and limits the time a recreational vehicle (e.g., RV's and travel trailers) can be parked in the public ROW to 7-days (if occupied) in a 60-day period. Previously, this ordinance was being enforced on a complaint basis based on past Council direction over a decade ago. Going forward, the ordinance will be enforced on a uniform basis. To this end, the City is asking all citizens to relocate any unattended commercial vehicle, trailer, or recreational vehicle from the ROW on or before **July 9, 2019** in advance of a city-wide code enforcement campaign. Public Notice of this requirement was placed in the May utility bills and on the City's website and Facebook page. Also included in the Public Notice was a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) and contact numbers for citizens who may require additional information.
- 6) **City of Smithville Monthly Sales Tax Update** - Below are the sales tax allocations for May 2018 vs. May 2019 (retail sales made primarily in March). This data reflects RETAIL sales of goods and services subject to LOCAL sales tax. Our sales tax payment (receipt) for May was \$39,410. This represents a **10.05% INCREASE** in our net payment compared to the same time last year. Basically, consumers spent more money for local goods and services in March. Sales tax dollars are used to make street / road repairs and help pay for community services like FIRE and POLICE. Total year-to-date payments are \$235,812. Remember...SHOP LOCAL - it makes a difference!!!

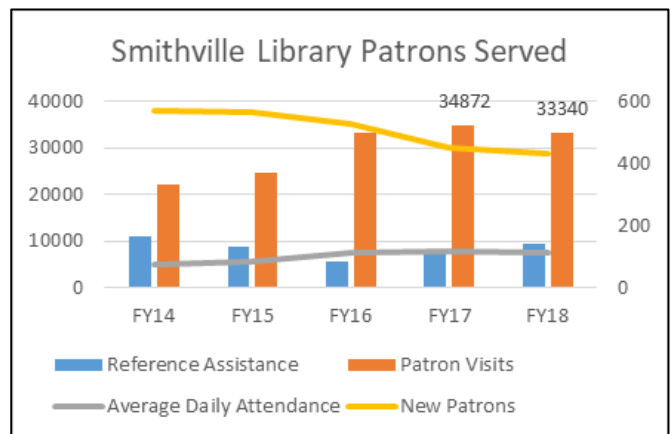
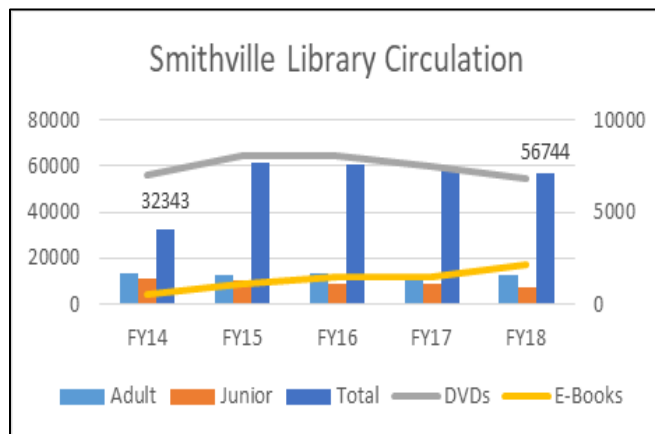
### Bastrop County Sales Tax Allocation - May 2019

County/City	Current Rate	Net Payment This Period	Comparable Payment Prior Year	% Change	2019 Payments To Date	2018 Payments To Date	% Change
Bastrop	1.50%	\$596,619	\$730,770	-18.35%	\$3,036,934	\$3,028,255	0.28%
Elgin	1.50%	\$191,027	\$205,564	-7.07%	\$902,648	\$889,591	1.46%
Smithville	1.50%	\$60,837	\$55,277	10.05%	\$235,812	\$240,963	-2.13%
County Total		\$848,483	\$991,612	-16.87%	\$4,175,393	\$4,158,808	0.40%

## City Manager Update – 5/10/19 (continued)

7) **Smithville SEE/CLICK/FIX Issue Reporting Performance Ranked #3 in the Nation** - The City of Smithville was ranked #3 in the nation by SEE/CLICK/FIX at the end of Q1 2019 for the [“Most Engaged”](#) and [“Most Responsive”](#) local government in the Small Community category (i.e., population ranging from 0 to 10,000 citizens). During Q1 2019, there were 150 requests created and 141 requests “closed”. SeeClickFix is a user-friendly, cloud-based platform that gives citizens the ability to “connect” with City Hall through a variety of means. Citizens can report issues (e.g., pothole, broken street light, etc.) using their smartphones, Facebook, and/or the City website. The system automatically documents the location via GPS coordinates and creates a work order that is routed to the department responsible for resolving the issue and completing the work. The platform has been tailored to track closure status, work order aging, location, and type of issue being reported. This partnership not only allows Smithville citizens to report problems, but also to view, comment on, and vote to fix problems submitted by their neighbors. Citizens can even create their own “watch areas” to receive notifications about all the issues reported in their community, enabling them to follow the progress of all service requests — not just the ones they report. The SeeClickFix app also keeps citizens engaged during the process by communicating what steps have been (or will be taken) to resolve the issue while providing links to other important information like City News, Calendar, and Utilities. The SeeClickFix mobile app is available for download on Android → [SeeClickFix-ANDROID](#) and iPhone → [SeeClickFix-iPHONE](#). In addition to the mobile apps, citizens can send reports to the City website → <https://www.ci.smithville.tx.us/>. SeeClickFix provides a reliable issue(s) reporting / work order platform to enhance citizen engagement and improve operational efficiency.

8) **Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) Annual Report Submitted** – The Smithville Public Library submitted its annual report to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) on April 30, 2019 as required for accreditation. It is expected that TSLAC will complete their final in June and that the library will continue to be eligible for state-sponsored grants and programs, as well as have access to numerous state-wide resources, such as inter-library loans and the TexShare Databases. In comparison to last year, there has been a slight decrease in overall circulation, patron visits, volunteer hours, and computer use, but an increase in circulation of e-books (digital downloads), Wi-Fi use, program attendance, and literacy contact hours (see charts below). Last year, \$290,208 was spent on direct library operating expenditures, with \$280,770 being from local funds (the remainder was non-local grant funding). The City of Smithville’s contribution to that total was \$261,329 (Bastrop County was \$8,500) with the remainder coming from grants, foundations, and individual donations. So, why does this matter? From a 2017 study on public libraries in Texas, “for every \$1 invested in public libraries, communities see, on average, a return of \$4.64 in access to resources, programming, services, and technology.” The report summarizes that: The impact of Texas public libraries is still underestimated. Public libraries serve their communities by making information and learning readily accessible to any individuals who choose to enter a library’s doors or, in recent years, use a library’s online portal. The individuals who use the libraries directly benefit by gaining knowledge and ideas. Even those who choose not to use their local public library benefit by being part of a more educated community. Substantial research has concluded that economic growth and leadership is highly correlated with highly educated communities. Public libraries offer every person an opportunity to improve his or her education and every business an opportunity to improve their productivity. Public libraries are an overlooked factor in economic leadership among states. Contact Judy Bergeron and/or or click → [https://www.tsl.texas.gov/sites/default/files/public/tslac/pubs/ROI\\_Final.pdf](https://www.tsl.texas.gov/sites/default/files/public/tslac/pubs/ROI_Final.pdf)

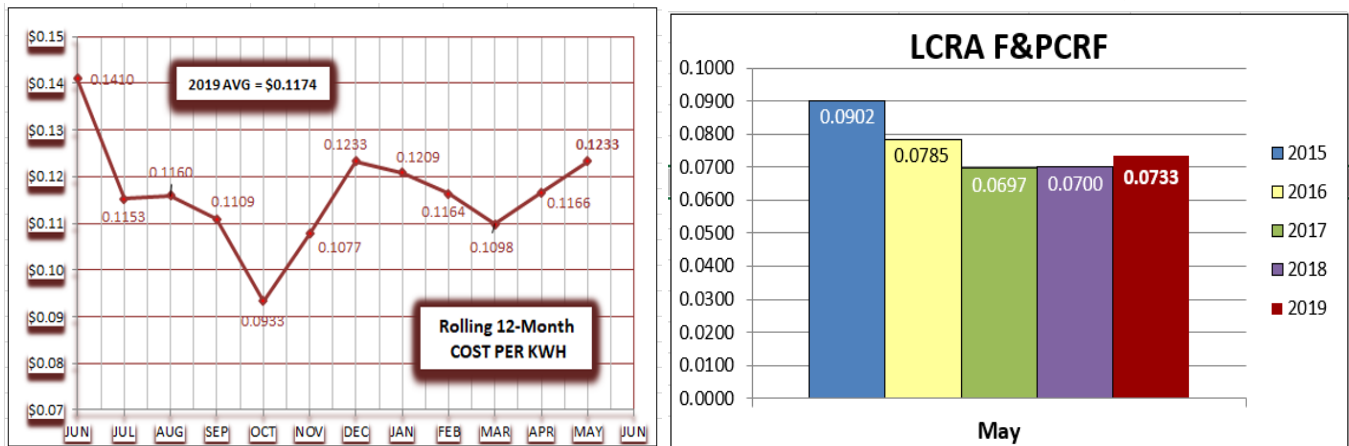


## City Manager Update – 5/10/19 (continued)

9) **City Brush Dump Mulch Issue** - Over the past 4-weeks, there have been several Smithville Volunteer Fire Department (SVFD) call-outs to the City Brush Dump on Mt. Pleasant Road (aka Dump Ground Road) in response to a decomposing mulch pile that spontaneously ignited and kept re-igniting. During each response, the SVFD sprayed the 15-foot tall 50-foot wide mulch pile with copious amount of water. A front-end loader was then used to turn over the base of pile that over-heated and dirt placed on top of the extinguished mulch. Complicating matters was the fact that our bulldozer remained in the shop for repair. So, the pile could not be completely spread out. Additionally, the recent rains couple with high afternoon temperatures and wind kept heating up the mulch pile's core causing it to smolder and re-ignite. For 2-weeks, close patrols (fire watches) were implemented to check on the brush dump every 2-4 hours. On Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, the bulldozer was repaired and returned to the City. The mulch pile causing the issue was completely knocked down (SEE PHOTOS). Each year, the City contracts with a wood recycler from Austin who brings out a tub-grinder to chip up all the trees, leaves, and limbs collected throughout our community. This service is a budgeted item that costs approximately \$35k. As you can imagine, there is a lot of material at the City brush dump that must be converted into mulch. We will be obtaining quotes to have the other piles removed as we are running out of space. I will be requesting additional funds from the Council in next year's budget to have the majority of any newly ground mulch removed. As reminder, citizens are welcome to load as much mulch as they can haul off at no charge. Currently, the brush dump is open 24/7 for disposal of leaves, limbs, and trees. Construction debris or household garbage is not allowed.

10) **Residential Cost Per Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Calculated** – An analysis of LCRA billing data was conducted to determine residential cost per kilowatt hour (kWh) in May. 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 May is \$0.0733. This represents a **10.14% INCREASE** compared to April's fuel cost of \$0.0666. Adding the City's distribution fee of \$0.0500 and LCRA's \$0.0733 fuel cost, **the cost per kWh for residential service in Smithville during MAY will be \$0.1233**. 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 - May 2019**



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

The **15<sup>th</sup> Annual Smithville Fly-In** will be held this **Saturday, May 11, 2019** at the Smithville Municipal Airport. The event will start at 10 a.m. and the day will be filled with airplanes, pilots, games, and prizes. Food will be available from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information and or updates visit <https://www.facebook.com/Fly84R?fref=ts>. **THIS EVENT HAS BEEN CANCELLED DUE TO THE THREAT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER.**

A **Police Memorial Ceremony** will be held at Fairview Cemetery in Bastrop on **Wednesday, May 15, 2019** at 10:00 am. If you're available, your attendance will be greatly appreciated. If you cannot make the ceremony, please take time out to remember National Police Week May 12-18 and THANK our Police Officers and Dispatchers for all they do to keep everyone safe. Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week is an observance in the United States that pays tribute to the local, state, and Federal Peace Officers who have died in the line of duty. In honor of the fallen, City flags will be flown at half-mast.



## City Manager Update – 5/10/19 (continued)

The Chamber of Commerce will be holding a **Ribbon Cutting** ceremony on **Thursday, May 16, 2019** from 5-7:00 pm to welcome the newest Central Business District business --- THE ROYAL TOMATO, 212 Main Street.

The **Smithville Volunteer Fire Department Annual Fundraiser** will be held on **Sunday, May 19, 2019** at Riverbend Park. Lunch will be served at 11 a.m. with the auction at 1 p.m. Lunch includes fried chicken, sausage and all the sides for \$10. Raffle tickets are \$2 each or 6 for \$10. The grand prize is an Oklahoma Joe Smoker and Patio Set. If you would like to donate or purchase raffle tickets, click on the following link <https://smithvillevfd.org/> . Hope to see you there!

I will be taking vacation May 23-24 (Thursday and Friday) to attend a high school graduation ceremony for my niece in St. Louis, MO. The trip will give me a little time to recharge and recover before the staff and I begin working on the FY19/20 preliminary budget.

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

-- Robert --

## PHOTOS (5/10/19):

### SPD / SPA Blue Bunny Easter Egg Hunt @ Riverbend Park



### Colorado River Flooding @ Boat Ramp and Riverbend Park



### Small Drainage Projects - Loop 230 @ McSweeney and Hill Street





## PHOTOS (5/10/19):

### New Home Construction

San Jacinto Street



Eagleston Street



4<sup>th</sup> Avenue



2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Hickory



East Street



FM 2571



### Brush Dump Mulch Fire



### Flower Bed @ City Hall



### SVFD Annual Fundraiser

