

City Manager Update – 6/11/21

TGIF! The severe thunderstorm that occurred on the Friday before Memorial Day caused multiple power outages, downed trees, and flooding of several businesses in the downtown area. We received approximately 1.75 inches of rain with wind gusts of up to 60-70 mph. Forty-five percent (45%) of the City's utility customers lost power with the longest duration outage of 9.5 hours. Public Works and Utilities personnel worked non-stop for 20-hours to restore power and remove fallen trees from roads and alleyways (SEE PHOTOS). A heartfelt THANK YOU is in order for those employees that helped the city expedite recovery from this storm event.

June 1, 2021 marked the beginning of my 8th year as Smithville's City Manager. It's hard to believe 2,555 days have passed since officially being hired. Well, you know the old saying, "How time flies when you're having fun." We have dealt with pit bulls, golf carts, smart meters, JADE-HELM, fires, floods, freezes, hurricanes, bridge failures, litigation, legislation, COVID-19, and a host of other issues over the past 7-years---all while trying to improve our infrastructure, reduce debt, and manage growth. The pace has not slowed since stepping into the role back in 2014. However, I am pleased that we are making progress as a community. Also, June 1st marked the official start of the 2021 Atlantic Hurricane Season which will run until November 30, 2021.

The rain showers we received in May and June will soon be taking a backseat to summer heat and humidity. All City personnel working outdoors have been instructed to remain hydrated and take frequent breaks to prevent heat-related injury/illness. The hot temperature(s) combined with high humidity can elevate the heat index well above triple digits making outdoor working conditions hazardous. A cooler with ice-water and/or Gatorade is provided on each City vehicle. With the higher summer temperatures, citizens will be using more water to keep their lawns green and more electricity to keep their houses cool (present company included). This will provide additional utility revenue for the city to help us hit our budget forecast. With respect to water use, the City has a [Drought Contingency Plan](#) whereby water use restrictions will be implemented based upon triggering events. Specifically, the cumulative use of 1.5 million gallons of water (or more) for three consecutive days. I'm pleased to report that we are a long way from hitting the 1.5-million-gallon drought contingency plan action level. During the current calendar year, the peak daily water demand for the City of Smithville occurred on February 17th with 1,252,947 gallons used. The large amount of water used was attributed to busted / broken water lines due to the arctic freeze. In comparison, the largest peak demand recorded last year occurred on Wednesday, August 19, 2020 when the total city-wide daily water use was 681,889 gallons. Our current city-wide water storage capacity is approximately 1.6 million gallons. The monthly base cost for residential water service in Smithville is \$16.50 (which includes the first 2000 gallons) plus \$3.10 for every 1000 gallons of water used thereafter. Note: An average family of 4 uses approximately 400 gallons per day and 12,000 gallons / month. With the \$16.50 base rate included, this equates to an average of \$47.50 monthly expenditure for residential water service.

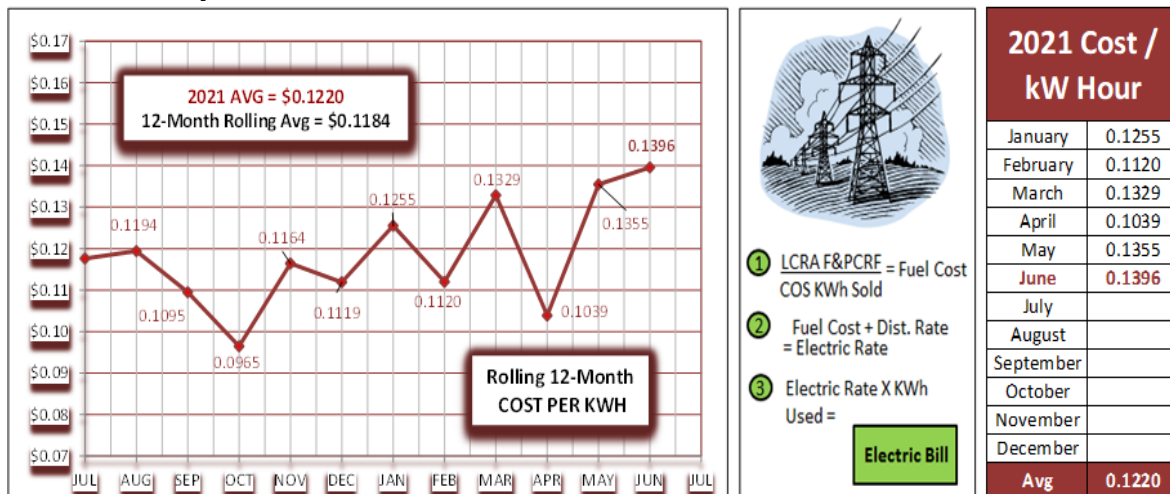
Here is a list of accomplishments, issues, and planned activities since my last update:

- 1) City-wide Mosquito Spraying Initiated** – In addition to worrying about COVID-19, the recent rains combined with warmer temperatures have created the perfect breeding ground for mosquitos. Besides being a nuisance, many citizens are concerned about the threat of [West Nile](#) and [Zika](#) viruses. In response, the city has begun spraying all roads and alley-ways twice a week in the evening hours between 9:00 pm and 3:00 am (every Tuesday and Friday). The city is using "Evoluer 30-30" mosquito repellant which is mixed with an oil surfactant and delivered by a truck-mounted, ultra-low volume mister / sprayer. The manner and method in which the city dispenses the mosquito repellant solution complies with all regulatory requirements governing its use and does not present a significant health hazard to humans when delivered in DILUTE concentrations. However, the mixture can be toxic to fish and bees if sprayed directly in fish ponds or on blooming crops where bees are active. Note: Roads and alleys will be sprayed during the evening hours when bees are not active. Click on the following link to review the [Evoluer 30-30 Safety Data Sheet \(SDS\)](#). In the meantime, citizens can help do their part by keeping tall grass mowed and removing commonly overlooked breeding spots that can hold water that include old tires, clogged gutters, abandoned tubs or buckets. A good mosquito repellant (e.g., OFF, CUTTER, REPEL, etc.) is also advised if going outdoors in the late afternoon / evening. Cloves inserted into lime halves also does a decent job for localized mosquito control. Some people swear by rubbing dryer sheets on their arms. When all else fails --- the palm of your hand is a tried and true, guaranteed organic method of mosquito abatement! Click on the following link for some interesting facts about mosquitos--> <https://blog.mosquito.buzz/20-random-mosquito-facts-you-didnt-know>. Please contact City Hall at (512) 237-3282 if you have any questions.

City Manager Update – 6/11/21 (continued)

- 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 June. 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 June is \$0.0896. This represents a **4.80% INCREASE** compared to May's fuel cost of \$0.0855. Adding the City's distribution fee of \$0.0500 and LCRA's \$0.0896 fuel cost, the cost per kWh for residential service in Smithville during JUNE will be \$0.1396 (3% increase compared to May). Fuel costs are typically higher during the summer months and the higher temperatures will increase both consumption and demand. As such, some citizens may become angry that their bill "skyrocketed" in June. Please remember that the City of Smithville only charges customers for what they use and when the electrical demand is high --- so is the cost per kilowatt. ERCOT provides energy conservation tips → <http://ercot.com/about/conservation/> to help reduce consumption which in turn will help citizens save money. 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 11-13 cents.

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



- 3) Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) HOME Grant Application** – The City of Smithville (working through Langford Community Management Services) will be submitting a Housing Rehabilitation Assistance (HRA) Program grant application to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA). The HRA program and is more commonly referred to as the HOME grant program. If awarded, the City of Smithville will be guaranteed enough funds to build one (1) new \$135,000 home within the city limits once an eligible candidate is identified. The HOME grant program funds rehabilitation (or reconstruction) of homes owned and occupied by low-to-moderate income residents of our community. Eligible homes must be inside the city limits and homeowners must have clear title to their property, be current on their property taxes (and mortgage, if applicable), and must have incomes below the 80% Area Median Family Income (AMFI) limits for Bastrop County (see below).

Bastrop County 80% AMFI Limits for 2021								
Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Annual Income	\$ 54,700	\$ 62,500	\$ 70,300	\$ 78,100	\$ 84,350	\$ 90,600	\$ 96,850	\$103,100

The match requirement for the HOME grant program is 1% of the total construction cost for every one thousand (1000) population. Our current (estimated) population is 4,363. As such, the required match will be 4% or \$5,400. We can waive fees or other charges associated with HOME project (e.g., debris removal and container fees, tap fees, electrical hook up, building permits, etc.) to meet the match criteria. The \$5,400 match will be part of next year's budget. We will have 6-months from the date of any contract award to identify a qualified homeowner for approval. Assuming we can find a qualified candidate, this will be the twenty-second (22nd) HOME grant house built in Smithville since 2003. Construction typically takes 4-6 months. There will be a resolution for discussion and action during the June 14, 2021 City Council meeting. Approving this resolution will allow the City of Smithville to submit its 2021 TDHCA application to continue as a participant in the HOME grant program.

City Manager Update – 6/11/20 (continued)

- 4) **City of Smithville Receives \$13M GLO CDBG-DR Mitigation (MIT) Grant** - I am pleased to announce the approval of the City of Smithville's application for the Texas General Land Office (GLO) Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Mitigation (MIT) funding. The total award / funding is \$12.9M with a 1% match. Smithville's application for city-wide drainage improvements will move forward to contracting upon execution of a Subrecipient Agreement. Back in 2015, the city partnered with Bastrop County and the Texas Water Development Board to conduct flood-plain protection studies of Gazley and Willow Creek(s). In 2017, the city conducted 2-Dimensional (2D) Flood Plain Modelling to determine base flood elevations of our entire community and identified multiple regional flood mitigation projects. These efforts (combined with multiple federally declared flood disasters) placed the City of Smithville in a very competitive position. There are four (4) projects that will be implemented utilizing a phased approach:

Project 1: NE / NW 2nd Street from Gresham to Hwy 95 Drainage Improvement - \$1,752,500

The scope of work includes upgrading the existing storm sewer system along NE/NW 2nd Street from Gresham Street to SH-95. The scope of work also includes re-constructing the existing streets to properly drain to the improved system. These improvements will help mitigate the risk of stormwater flooding existing businesses, residences, and streets in the downtown area.

Project 2: SE 4th Regional Detention Pond - \$5,388,250

The scope of work includes constructing a regional detention pond at the east end of Martin Luther King Drive and SE 4th Street and building a new storm sewer system to the proposed pond along SE 4th Street, Martin Luther King Drive, Bunte Street, SE 2nd Street, and Gentry Street. These improvements will help mitigate the risk of stormwater flooding the adjoining neighborhood and existing city streets.

Project 3: 4th- 6th Street Drainage Improvements - \$786,350

The scope of work includes extending the existing storm sewer system from Short and NE 5th Streets east to Garwood Street. From Garwood and NE 5th Streets, the storm sewer would then be extended north along Garwood to NE 6th Street and then east to Bishop Street. From Garwood and NE 5th Streets, the storm sewer would also be extended south along Garwood to NE 4th Street and then east to Turney Street. Finally, this part would include enlarging the existing storm sewer line along Byrne Street from NE 5th to NE 6th Street. These improvements will help mitigate the risk of stormwater flooding the existing residential neighborhoods within and near this area.

Project 4: Loop 230 Regional Detention Pond - \$2,618,500

The scope of work includes constructing a regional detention pond adjacent and to the north of railroad right-of-way south of Loop 230 and approximately 2,000 linear feet southeast of the intersection of McSweeney Street and NE 1st Street. It also includes constructing a new storm sewer system from the proposed pond north to Loop 230, east to Faulkner Road, north to Oak Meadows Drive, and east to Lueders Lane. These improvements will help mitigate the risk of stormwater flooding the adjoining neighborhoods north and west of the proposed pond.

CDBG-DR Mitigation Grant for City-wide Drainage Improvements			
Project	Project Description	Timeline	Cost
1	NE / NW 2nd Street from Gresham to Hwy 95	2022	\$1,752,500
2	MLK and SE 4th Regional Detention Pond	2023	\$5,388,250
3	4th-6th Street Draining Improvements	2024	\$786,350
4	Loop 230 Regional Detention Pond	2025	\$2,618,500
Other Costs	Engineering / Admin / Environmental	N/A	\$2,551,411
	Minus 1% City Match		-130,970
		TOTAL	\$12,966,041

- 5) **City-wide Street Sign Replacement Project Underway** – Over the next several weeks, City crews will be working to install new street signs at intersections that have no signs and/or replacing damaged or faded street signs throughout town. Approximately 1,200 signs were ordered at a cost of \$22k. The new signs will help residents, visitors, and emergency personnel better navigate our community. It is recommended that each resident post their 911 address in a prominent location on their homes and/or mailbox. (SEE PHOTOS)

6) **City of Smithville Sales Tax Update** - Below are the sales tax allocations for June 2021 vs. June 2020 (retail sales made primarily in April). This data reflects RETAIL sales of goods and services subject to LOCAL sales tax. Our sales tax payment (receipt) for June was \$64,516. This represents a **40.92% INCREASE** in our net monthly payment compared to the same time last year. Sales tax dollars are used to make street / road repairs and help pay for community services like the LIBRARY, FIRE DEPARTMENT, and POLICE. Total year-to-date payments are \$373,004 (approximately 17.87% higher or \$56k above last year's year-to-date performance). See below for a comparison. Remember...SHOP LOCAL - it makes a difference!!!

County/City	Current Rate	Net Payment This Period	Comparable Payment Prior Year	% Change	2021 Payments To Date	2020 Payments	% Change
Bastrop	1.50%	\$849,950	\$577,520	47.17%	\$4,728,990	\$3,831,129	23.43%
Elgin	1.50%	\$254,869	\$201,692	26.36%	\$1,417,747	\$1,348,535	5.13%
Smithville	1.50%	\$64,516	\$45,779	40.92%	\$373,004	\$316,430	17.87%
Bastrop County	0.50%	\$545,907	\$409,419	33.33%	\$3,005,663	\$2,564,302	17.21%

- 7) **Fawcett Water Plant Receives Facelift** – The Fawcett Water Plant (located at 306 NW 5th Street and Fawcett Street) recently received a “facelift”. The Pump Room and offices were cleaned and repainted as part of the water tower renovation / rehabilitation project. Incoming and outgoing directional water flow indicators will be added to all the piping in the next few weeks. (SEE PHOTOS)
- 8) **Brookshire Brothers Store #55 Expansion** – The City of Smithville received notice that Brookshire Brothers (Store #55) plans to spend approximately \$1.0-1.5M to renovate and expand their grocery store in Smithville to include a pharmacy, bakery, delicatessen, and cafe. Brookshire Brothers is known for their community support and they are typically the first to offer assistance during and after a disaster. Donations of food, water, and supplies help keep our emergency response personnel, displaced families, and community volunteers fed and prepared. In a recent economic development survey, 35% of respondents said they do not shop for groceries in Smithville. Variety, availability, quality, and price were listed as the most common reason(s) why citizens shop elsewhere. With the Austin-metro migration headed toward Bastrop County, Smithville is on the verge of explosive growth. New businesses are opening in our downtown district and sales tax revenues are at an all-time high. Construction of new homes has increased our tax base and more families are looking to move to Smithville. So, the timing is right for Brookshire Brothers to expand. Doing so will give Brookshire Brothers a competitive advantage while offering citizens the availability and variety of goods and services they are currently seeking elsewhere. Currently, the construction plans are being reviewed by a 3rd Party Engineering firm. Construction will take 2-3 months and will begin in the July / August timeframe.

There are several meetings and events in Smithville scheduled the next few weeks:

Thursday, June 10th: An [ANNULAR SOLAR ECLIPSE](#) will occur on June 10, 2021. A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes between Earth and the Sun, thereby totally or partly obscuring the image of the Sun for a viewer on Earth.

Friday, June 11th: There will be a Chamber of Commerce RIBBON CUTTING at the SMITHVILLE FOOD COURT located at 301 NW 3rd Street and Loop 230 on June 11, 2021 from 5-8:00 pm.

Saturday, June 12th: SMITHVILLE EMPTY BOWL PROJECT will be held IN-PERSON from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Smithville Community Gardens (107 SW 2nd Street) on June 12, 2021. There will also be a DRIVE-THRU set-up at the Smithville Food Pantry (301 Lee Street). The minimum suggested donation is \$20 per bowl. Click on link → <http://smithvilleemptybowl.com/> for more information.

Sunday, June 13th: There will be a PRE-JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION honoring the SMITHVILLE CITY COUNCIL for recognizing "Juneteenth" as an official City Holiday. The event will be held at the Smithville Recreation Center (106 Royston) from 1-3:00 pm. Attendance is FREE but limited to the first 100 people that RSVP. Dr. Desmar Walkes, Willy Culberson, Mayor Joanna Morgan, and Dr. Janie Freeny will be speaking. Music by Ms. Linda Greene and the Soultines. RSVP Mr. James Wimbley at jameswimbley54@yahoo.com or call (832) 921-9756.

Monday, June 14th: CITY COUNCIL MEETING (6-7:30pm) at City Hall. Citizens can access the meeting via YouTube → www.youtube.com/channel/UCN7rJz0wVks4zWV9EvKcH5w.

Thursday, June 17th: The Smithville Area Chamber of Commerce MONTHLY MIXER is scheduled for 6/17/21 at THE FRONT ROOM WINE BAR (located at 116 Main Street) from 5:00-7:00 pm.

Friday, June 18th: City Offices will be CLOSED on Friday, June 18, 2021 in observance of JUNETEENTH. City Hall office hours on the Monday-Thursday prior to the Holiday will be from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Saturday, June 19th: [JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION at MLK PARK](#) (10am-10pm). Parade, activities for kids, FREE food, and music for the community. For more information, call (737) 348-5269. Please practice safe social distancing as you enjoy the celebration.

Saturday, June 26th: The [15th ANNUAL FLY-IN](#) will be held at the Smithville-Crawford Municipal Airport (located at 765 NW Loop 230) on June 26, 2021 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Static displays and family fun. Free admission and parking. There will be hamburgers and hot dogs for sale.

Sunday, June 27th: Join HANNIBAL LOKUMBE on June 27, 2021 at the "TIN MAN" (located at 306 NW 5th and Fawcett Street) as he plays [HYMN FOR THE WORLD](#) on his trumpet atop the elevated water tower. Parking is available at Brookshire Brothers and/or the old Tax Office (404 Fawcett). For more information, please contact Jill Strube at the City of Smithville (512) 237- 3282 (x 2109) or email jstrube@ci.smithville.tx.us.

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

-- Robert

PHOTOS (6/11/21):

Fawcett Water Plant Pump Room Repainted (BEFORE and AFTER)



City-wide Street Sign Repair / Replacement



City Crews Respond to Memorial Weekend Rain Event



Cardinal Rescue @ Brookshire Brothers



Mosquito Spraying (Every Tues / Fri)

