

City Manager Update – 6/5/20

TGIF! This past Monday (June 1, 2020) marked the beginning of my 7th year as Smithville's City Manager. It's hard to believe 2,190 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, hurricanes, bridge failures, litigation, legislation, COVID-19, and a host of other issues over the past 6-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 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season which will run until November 30, 2020.

COVID-19 UPDATE: As of 6/5/20, there have been 1,174,948 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 1,767 deaths identified in the state of Texas. Click on the following link for the latest update on the Coronavirus from the [Texas Department of State Health Services \(DSHS\)](#). There are now two hundred thirty-four (234) confirmed cases and three (3) fatalities in Bastrop County. Smithville has incurred nine (9) confirmed COVID-19 cases. Ninety-five (95) individuals who tested positive have recovered. Bastrop County OEM has published a [Dashboard](#) that provides the total number of confirmed cases, fatalities, and recoveries. In addition, the gender, age, and location information (i.e., Bastrop, Elgin, Smithville, County, etc.) are also available. Since March 16, 2020, there have been 1,594 tests performed in the County. The Texas Military will be conducting additional testing at the Towers Nursing Home on Wednesday, June 10, 2020. We all need to be a part of the solution and until there is a vaccine, we should continue practicing the appropriate COVID-19 hygiene and social distancing protocols whenever (and wherever) possible.

The rain showers we received in April and May 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 May 10th (Mother's Day) with 467,120 gallons used (10% less than May 2019). In comparison, the largest peak demand recorded last year occurred on Monday, August 19, 2019 when the total city-wide daily water use was 705,257 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: A family of 4 uses approximately 300-400 gallons per day and 10,000 gallons / month.

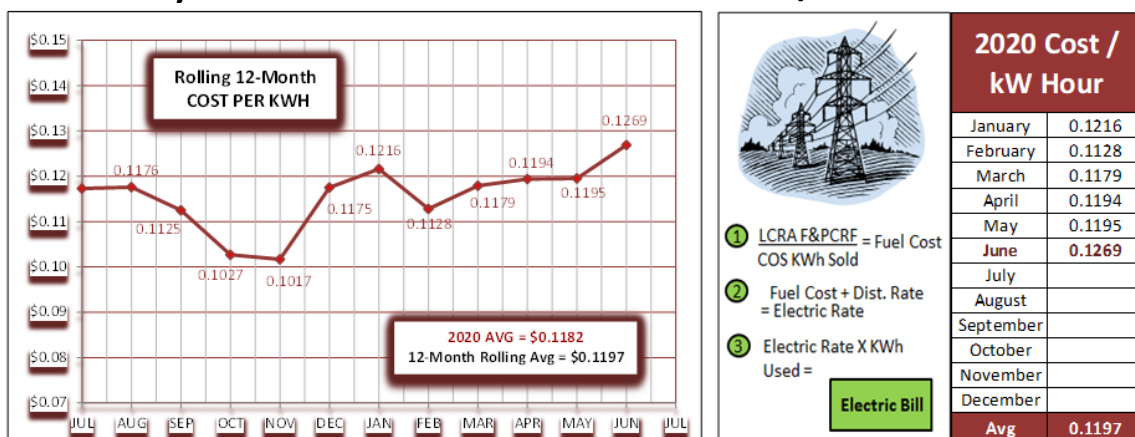
Here is a list of accomplishments, issues, and planned activities since my last update:

- 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 will be 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 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.

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- 2) **2019 TCEQ Annual Drinking Water Quality Report** - The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) issued the 2019 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for the City of Smithville for the period of January 1 to December 31, 2019. There were no radioactive, microbial, inorganic, or organic chemical contaminants in excess of those found in naturally-occurring sources of water. The City of Smithville's drinking water received a "Superior Rating" from the TCEQ based upon the criteria listed in [Title 30, Texas Administrative Code, Subsection 290.47\(a\), Appendix A](#). A copy of the 2019 Annual Drinking Water Quality report is available for customer review on the City's website → <http://www.ci.smithville.tx.us/our-community/news/2019-annual-drinking-water-quality-report/256/>.
- 3) **City of Smithville Chief of Police** - Michael Maugere tendered his resignation as the City of Smithville Chief of Police effective Friday, May 22, 2020. Mike accepted a job with a private security company in Austin. Mike has been employed with the City of Smithville for the past 13-1/2 years. We thank Mike for his many years of service and wish him the best of luck as he enters the next chapter in his life. I am pleased to announce that **David Repka** has been promoted as the new Chief of Police for the City of Smithville. David is a Master Peace Officer with over 25-years of experience who joined the Smithville PD in 2015 and served as the Assistant Chief of Police for the past 3-years. David assumed responsibility as the Chief of Police on Friday, May 22, 2020. Mike's contributions as the Chief of Police have left the department in better shape than he found it. Bottom line, the Smithville PD is well-managed, effective, and respected. I am confident that Chief Repka will achieve similar results. Please share this information as appropriate. If you happen to run into Mike or David on the streets of Smithville, please congratulate them on their past accomplishments and wish them future success.
- 4) **City Council to Consider Homestead Tax Exemption for the Disabled and Elderly** – The Smithville City Council will be considering an ordinance to allow a Homestead Tax Exemption for the Disabled and Elderly (persons over 65 years of age) during their meeting on Monday, June 8, 2020. Currently, the City allows a \$3,000 tax exemption for persons over 65 and a 100% disabled veteran exemption. If approved, the tax exemption for disabled persons and those persons age 65 and older would be \$10,000. The exemption(s) would go into effect during the 2021 tax year. Persons that qualify for the exemption(s) must file the appropriate paperwork with the Bastrop County Appraisal District (BCAD). The City of Elgin, Bastrop County, and each of the school districts have approved similar exemptions.
- 5) **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 \$0.0769. This represents a **10.59% INCREASE** compared to May's fuel cost of \$0.0695. Adding the City's distribution fee of \$0.0500 and LCRA's \$0.0769 fuel cost, the cost per kWh for residential service in Smithville during JUNE will be \$0.1269 (6% 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 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 11-12 cents.

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



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

Monday, June 8th: CITY COUNCIL MEETING (6-7:30pm) via Zoom. Citizens can access the meeting via YouTube → www.youtube.com/channel/UCN7rJz0wVKS4zWV9EvKcH5w).

Thursday, June 18th: CHAMBER MIXER (5-7:00pm) and SUMMER MUSIC IN THE PARK at the Gazebo. This mixer will be hosted by Butler Contracting. Please practice safe social distancing as you enjoy the music.

Friday, June 19th: JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION at MLK PARK (10am-10pm). Parade, activities for kids, FREE food, and music for the community. For more information, call (512) 360-7381. Please practice safe social distancing as you enjoy the celebration.

Saturday, June 21, 2020: An ANNULAR SOLAR ECLIPSE will occur on June 21, 2020. 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.

-- Robert --



**SEE PHOTOS OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS ON
NEXT PAGE**

PHOTOS (6/5/20):

FEMA Drainage Improvement Project at 1st and Marburger (Est. Completion – June 30, 2020)



ADA Compliant Parking and Ramp Construction @ City Hall (Est. Completion – June 19, 2020)



4th Avenue Bridge over Gazley Creek Construction Progress (Est. Completion – August 21, 2020)

