

City Manager Update (8-7-20)

TGIF!!! The “Dog Days” of summer are upon us and area vegetation is extremely dry. As such, an outdoor **BURN BAN** was issued for Bastrop County on July 24, 2020. A burn ban violation is a Class C misdemeanor that carries up to a \$500 fine. We have posted this information to both the City website and Facebook Page to remind citizens not to burn outdoors → <https://www.facebook.com/smithvilletx>.

As of 8/6/20, there have been 467,485 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 7,803 deaths identified in the state of Texas. There are now 1,344 confirmed cases and seventeen (17) fatalities in Bastrop County. This is a 110% increase in the number of positive cases and fatalities since July 10, 2020. Bastrop County OEM has published a [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) that provides the total number of confirmed cases, active cases, fatalities, and recoveries. Unfortunately, gender, age, and location information (i.e., Bastrop, Elgin, Smithville, County, etc.) are no longer available. Before the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and Bastrop County stopped providing this information, Smithville had incurred twenty-five (25) confirmed COVID-19 cases within the city limits and forty (40) cases in the unincorporated area of the 78957 Zip Code.

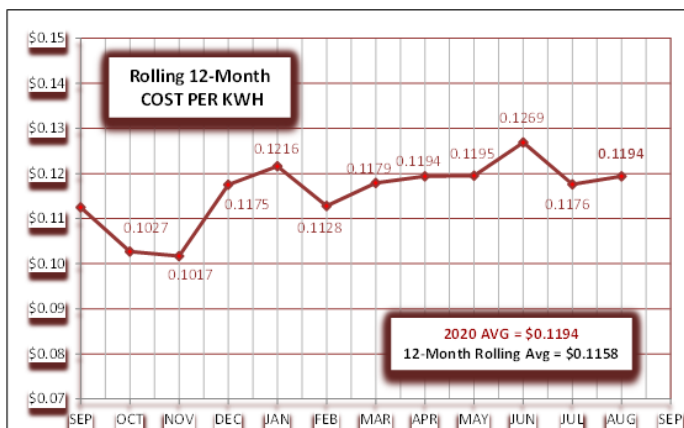
The FY20/21 budget cycle is well underway. I have been meeting with department heads to identify projects, plans, and preliminary budgetary needs. During our last staff meeting, I provided budget guidance and thanked the staff for their hard work over the past year. Budget workshops will be held on August 26, 2020 and September 9, 2020 via Zoom beginning at 5:00 pm. Public Hearings for the FY20/21 Tax Rate and Budget have also been scheduled. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend these workshops and public hearings. Click on the following link to access the City Calendar → <https://www.ci.smithville.tx.us/>.


Multiple infrastructure improvement projects have been completed or are in-process. Construction of the SE Second Street detention pond behind the City warehouse is almost complete. The 4th Avenue bridge is scheduled to open on Monday, August 17, 2020. TXDOT will be hosting a virtual ribbon cutting. Eighteen (18) new businesses have opened since the beginning of the year and new-home construction and renovation projects are underway. The M5 Subdivision (32 homes) will add much needed housing capacity in our residential district. Besides new housing, some of the other projects “in-the-works” include: a 1-Megawatt solar farm; water tower renovation, a 179 space RV Park; and the Chamber of Commerce / Visitor Center / Railroad Museum rebuild. Good things are happening within our community as we continue to grow. However, it is imperative that we continue to manage growth in a manner that preserves and protects our small-town look, charm, and feel.

Here is a list of significant accomplishments, events, 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 AUGUST. LCRA fuel costs vary month to month and are based upon electric utility generation, transmission, line loss, and service fees. The LCRA fuel cost per kWh for August is \$ 0.0694. This represents a **2.54% INCREASE** compared to July's fuel cost of \$ 0.0676. Adding the City's distribution fee of \$0.0500 and LCRA's \$0.0694 fuel cost, the cost per kWh for residential service in Smithville during AUGUST will be \$0.1194. 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 - AUGUST



	
2020 Cost / kW Hour	
January	0.1216
February	0.1128
March	0.1179
April	0.1194
May	0.1195
June	0.1269
July	0.1176
August	0.1194
September	
October	
November	
December	
Avg	0.1194

① LCRA F&PCRF = Fuel Cost
COS kWh Sold

② Fuel Cost + Dist. Rate
= Electric Rate

③ Electric Rate X kWh
Used =

Electric Bill

Note: LCRA Fuel & Power Cost Recovery Factor (See Table Above) + 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 (8-7-20) - continued

- 2) **City-wide Street Repairs and Paving Project Update** - City-wide road paving and street repair will begin in the next few weeks and continue through the Fall. The streets and roads listed below will be prepped, resurfaced, and repaved. The Bastrop County Maintenance Department (who owns the paving equipment) will be doing the majority of the work with support from the City of Smithville. We will be giving Main Street a facelift (weather permitting) in mid-September. Cracks in the pavement will be filled and sealcoat applied. Parking spaces will also be re-stripped. 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 reported and/or 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-wide Street Repairs and Paving Schedule - FALL 2020

Street	From / To	Paving Material	Prep Completed	Road Closure	Paving Date
Reed Street	FM2571 to Front Street	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Whitehead	700 Block Whitehead to Charleston	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Tiger Lane	Tiger Lane	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Main Street	1st Street to 8th Street	Sealcoat/Stripe	NO	YES	SEPTEMBER
NE 2nd Street	Olive to Main	Sealcoat/Stripe	NO	YES	SEPTEMBER
NW 2nd Street	Main to Ramona	Sealcoat/Stripe	NO	YES	SEPTEMBER
Gentry Street	Woodress Lane to 300 Block	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Bunte Street	Woodress Lane to 300 Block	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Anderson Street	SE 4th to End of Anderson	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Pendergrass Street	SE 4th to End of Pendergrass	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
SE 2nd Street	Taylor to Eagleston	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Byrne	Loop 230 to 500 Block	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Mills	500-900 Block	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
Mills	200 Block	Hot Mix	No	YES	TBD
8th Street	Short to Burleson	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
9th Street	Short to Burleson	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD
East Street	East Street to FM 2571	Chip Seal	NO	YES	TBD

- 3) **Bastrop County Juvenile Boot Camp Board of Director's Meeting** - The annual Bastrop County Juvenile Boot Camp Advisory Board Meeting was held via Zoom on July 22, 2020. As part of an inter-local cooperative agreement signed in 2001, the Cities and School Districts of Elgin, Bastrop, and Smithville formed an eleven (11) member advisory board to govern the activities of the Bastrop County Juvenile Boot Camp (BCJBC). As the Smithville City Manager, I am serving as one of the eleven members. The BCJBC is a non-profit organization which provides behavioral and educational services for court-ordered adolescents between the ages of 10 and 17. Last year, forty-four (44) students from the County participated in the 90-day program. The length of stay depends upon the duration and severity of school expulsion. Smithville ISD sent one (1) student to the program. The BCJBC Board of Directors approved the 2020-2021 cadet / parent handbook and 2020 fiscal budget. The program is funded on a pro-rata basis with the City of Smithville contributing \$4,620 per year.
- 4) **2020 PROPOSED Ad Valorem Tax Rate** - We will be recommending a PROPOSED AD VALOREM TAX RATE of \$0.54906 cents per \$100 valuation --- a DECREASE of approximately \$0.02 cents from our current rate of \$0.56902. The strategy we have followed in the past was to identify the maximum tax rate allowable without triggering the possibility of a rollback election then decide the amount of increase (if any) that is required to support the proposed budget. The FY20-21 effective tax rate (now called the "No-New-Revenue Tax Rate") is 0.52752. The rollback rate (now called the "Voter-Approval Tax Rate") is \$0.54906. The maximum increase the City can raise taxes in a given year without triggering a rollback election is 3.5% of the effective M&O tax rate. The effective tax rate is basically the tax rate that would generate the same amount of revenue in the current tax year as was generated by a taxing unit's adopted tax rate in the preceding tax year from property that is taxable in both the current tax year and the preceding tax year. You will have the opportunity to discuss and vote on the proposed tax rate in the coming weeks. In the interim, the City will publish the Notice of 2020 Proposed Property Tax Rate in the Smithville Times. There will be discussion and action during Monday night's Council meeting to adopt the Ad Valorem Tax Rate at the September 14, 2020 council meeting and public hearing on the budget. Note: This agenda item simply sets the date that the tax rate will be adopted - not the rate itself.

City Manager Update (8-7-20) – continued

- 5) **Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) HOME Grant Project Update** – Last year, the City of Smithville received a Housing Rehabilitation Assistance (HRA) grant from Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) to build two (2) new \$100,000 homes within the city limits. The HRA program is more commonly referred to as the HOME grant program. 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 60% median family income in the County. The City match requirement for the HOME grant program is 1% of the total construction cost for every thousand population. Our current (estimated) population is 4250. This makes the match 5% or \$10,000 for the two homes. The City has waived fees and 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. Two qualified property owners have been identified at 207 Gentry and 307 Yeager and construction is currently underway. Once construction is complete (estimated mid-September), these two new homes will be twentieth (20th) and twenty-first (21st) HOME grant houses to be built in Smithville since 2003. (SEE PHOTOS)
- 6) **GLO CDBG-MIT Engineering Services Request for Qualification (RFQ) Received** – The City of Smithville published a Request for Qualification (“RFQ”) in the Austin American Statesman for engineering service required to develop budget, scope of work, and draft specifications for the preparation of a General Land Office (GLO) Community Development Block Grant Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) application. This will include 2015, 2016, Hurricane Harvey State Mitigation Competition and Method of Distribution activities(s), and upon funding, the subsequent preliminary and final design plans, bid documents, and necessary interim and final inspections required by the City. RFQ’s for engineering services were received and reviewed by City staff on July 10, 2020. Experience, work performance, and capacity to perform were criteria used by the City staff to evaluate / differentiate each engineering consultant's qualifications. Six (6) Engineering services consultants submitted their qualifications for consideration. **BEFCO Engineering, Inc.** received the highest score as ranked by the evaluation team and as such will be presented to the City Council for consideration / selection at the August 10, 2020 City Council meeting.
- 7) **National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) Wayfinding Signs Installed** - The National Endowment for the Arts grant program (that began in August of 2017) is complete with the installation of wayfinding signage. This was a 50/50 grant program bringing a total of \$60,000 in federal dollars to the Smithville community. About 100 people volunteered more than 500 hours of their time (valued at over \$11,000) in creating these public art pieces – plus another 140 people who voted on the Legacy Portrait project. The “Smithville Possibilities” mural (illustrating the legacy of Smithville) was installed at the SISD DAEP last year. The five other public art pieces are: “Wildflowers” by Elizabeth Sullivan (at the Recreation Center), “Steam” by Michael W. Hall (at Fire Station 2), the MLK Drive Sign by Stefanie Distefano, “Tilly and Mason” by Stephanie Shroyer at the old Food Pantry/current Community Gardens building on SW 2nd and Lee, and “Legacy Portraits” by James Culleton at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Wayfinding signs were designed and developed with community member input. The cost for the seven (7) wayfinding signs was approximately \$10k with the City paying 50% match or \$5k. (SEE PHOTOS)

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

Smithville Whole Health Partnership Estate Sale at the old Towers Nursing Home will be held **August 6-8, 2020** from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm daily. All proceeds to be given to 501c3 businesses.

The next **Smithville City Council** meeting will be held on **Monday, August 10, 2020** (6:00) pm via Zoom. Citizens can access the meeting via YouTube → (www.youtube.com/channel/UCN7rJz0wVks4zWV9EvKcH5w). Click → [HERE](#) for agenda.

The **4th Avenue Bridge Re-opening** is scheduled for **Monday, August 17, 2020** at 9:00 am.

1ST BUDGET WORKSHOP – **Wednesday, August 26, 2020** via Zoom at 5:00 pm. Citizens can access the meeting via YouTube → (www.youtube.com/channel/UCN7rJz0wVks4zWV9EvKcH5w).

CITY OFFICES will be CLOSED on **Monday, September 7, 2020** in observance of Labor Day.

PUBLIC HEARING on Tax Rate / Budget and 2nd Budget Workshop – **Wednesday, September 9, 2020** via Zoom at 5:00 pm. Citizens can access the meeting via YouTube → (www.youtube.com/channel/UCN7rJz0wVks4zWV9EvKcH5w).

PHOTOS – 8/7/20

New Wayfinding Signs Installed



BURN BAN in Effect



SWHP Estate Sale @ the Old Towers



2020 HEB It's Time Texas
Community Award Winner



Dead Tree Removal at SISD Elementary School on Bishop Street



4th Avenue Bridge Construction (Bridge Scheduled to OPEN on Monday, August 17, 2020 @ 9:00 am)



HOME Grant Houses Under Construction @ 207 Gentry and 307 Yeager



City Offices **CLOSED**



Monday, September 7, 2020