

City Manager Update (8-9-19)

TGIF!!! It has been a surprisingly hectic but productive week. The “Dog Days” of summer are upon us and it has been almost a month since we have received any significant rainfall. Area vegetation is extremely dry. As such, an outdoor **BURN BAN** was issued for Bastrop County on August 6, 2019. 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>. The Texas Forest Service will be staging a fire-fighting helicopter and crew next week at the Smithville Crawford Municipal Airport to provide local assistance in the event of a wildfire. The fire-fighting crew will remain at the airport until the threat of wildfires subside.

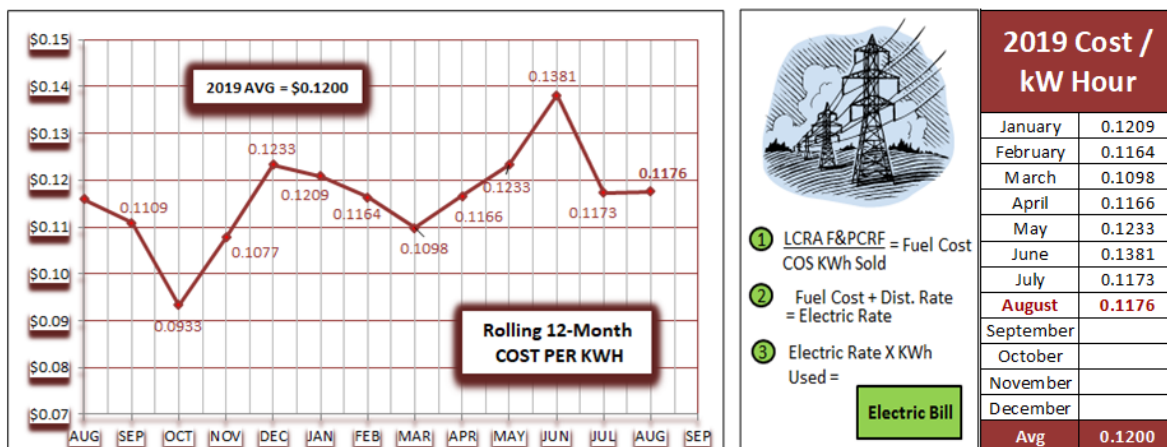
Multiple infrastructure improvement projects (e.g., roads, sidewalks, drainage, water, and sewer) have been completed or are in-process. Fifteen (15) new businesses have opened since the beginning of the year and new-home construction and renovation projects are underway. Hurta Estates (50 homes) and the proposed M5 Subdivision (32 homes) will add much needed housing capacity in our residential districts. Construction of the SISD Athletic Complex, Junior High School, and Towers Nursing Home are almost complete. Currently, there are ten (10) development projects the City is supporting in addition to keeping up with the daily responsibilities of running the City. Some of the development projects “in-the-works” include: a 1-Megawatt solar farm; a 179 space RV Park; a country inn; airport hangar acquisition; SISD facilities renovation; and the Chamber of Commerce / Visitor Center / Railroad Museum rebuild. For more information, click on the following link → [State of the City Presentation](#). 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.

The FY19/20 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 28, 2019 and September 4, 2019 at City Hall beginning at 5:00 pm. Public Hearings for the FY19/20 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/>.

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 \$ 0.0676. This represents a **0.043% INCREASE** compared to July's fuel cost of \$ 0.0673. Adding the City's distribution fee of \$0.0500 and LCRA's \$0.0676 fuel cost, the cost per kWh for residential service in Smithville during AUGUST will be \$0.1176. Our Utility revenues this year have been much lower than expected due to a very mild winter and wet spring. However, the summer heat is here and there has been very little rain. So, I expect utility revenues to increase - especially with 100° F temperature forecast the next 7-10 days. 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



Note: LCRA Fuel & Power Cost Recovery Factor (See Table Above) + City Distribution Fee* (\$0.0500) = Cost / kWh

*Residential Distribution Fee Increase of \$0.005 Approved by City Council on October 1, 2017

City Manager Update (8-9-19) - continued

- 2) **City-wide Street Repairs and Paving Project Update** - With assistance from the County, Jack's crew finished paving nine (9) streets throughout our community this past week (SEE PHOTOS). Additional streets (to be determined) will be paved during the Fall. 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

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

- 3) **Bastrop County Juvenile Boot Camp Board of Director's Meeting** - The annual Bastrop County Juvenile Boot Camp Advisory Board Meeting was held in Elgin on August 8, 2019. 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, twenty-eight (28) 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 two (2) students. The Board approved the 2019-2020 cadet / parent handbook and 2019 fiscal budget. The program is funded on a pro-rata basis with the City of Smithville contributing \$4,620 per year.
- 4) **2019 PROPOSED Ad Valorem Tax Rate** - We will be recommending a PROPOSED AD VALOREM TAX RATE of \$0.57246 cents per \$100 valuation --- an INCREASE of \$0.003 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 2019-20 effective tax rate is 0.521040. The rollback rate is \$0.572467. The maximum increase the City can raise taxes in a given year without triggering a rollback election is 8% 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 2019 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 9, 2019 council meeting and public hearing on the budget. This agenda item simply sets the date that the tax rate will be adopted - not the rate itself.
- 5) **Tiny Home Survey Update:** Participation in the on-line Tiny Home survey has been disappointing with only 145 citizens (out of 4,050) responding since the survey was published on the City website and FB Page 3-weeks ago. As such, the survey has been extended another 2-weeks. Preliminary results indicate the majority of respondents (74%) are in favor of allowing Tiny Homes in our community. Forty-two percent (42%) of the respondents feel Tiny Homes should be allowed anywhere within the city limits. Sixty percent (60%) of the respondents agree that design requirements / regulations should be adopted. If you have not already done so, please take/share the survey before it closes on August 23, 2019 → <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TinyHomeSMV>. Once the Tiny Home survey is complete and the results compiled, a public forum will be scheduled to share the information and obtain additional feedback from citizens. The date and time of the Tiny Home public forum is still to be determined but most likely will be held in October after we get through the budget process.

City Manager Update (8-9-19) - continued

- 6) **Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Event Held** - On Saturday, August 3rd, the City of Smithville partnered with the City of Bastrop, Keep Bastrop County Beautiful, Keep Smithville Beautiful, Bastrop County, and Lee County to hold our fourth Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) and paint collection event. The HHW facility is located at 109 Taylor and SE 2nd Street. If you recall, the City of Smithville partnered with Bastrop and Lee Counties in 2017 on a grant application to CAPCOG to construct a HHW collection facility and re-use center. The initial \$42k grant paid for a hazardous waste storage building, equipment, supplies, and training for staff. Approximately 75 vehicles brought used paint, pesticides, and household chemicals for FREE disposal. In addition, \$417 was received in donations that will help replenish supplies. A special THANK YOU to the twenty-five (25) volunteers that helped make the event a success. The next HHW collection event is scheduled for **Saturday, November 2, 2019** from 9:00 am to noon. (SEE PHOTOS)
- 7) **Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) HOME Grant Applications Submitted** – The City of Smithville (working through Langford Community Management Services) submitted two Housing Rehabilitation Assistance (HRA) Program grant applications to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA). The HRA program and is more commonly referred to as the HOME grant program. The City of Smithville will be guaranteed enough funds to build two (2) new \$100,000 homes within the city limits once eligible homes and candidates are 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 60% area median family income limits for Bastrop County (see below).

TDHCA 60% AMFI Limits for 2019								
Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Annual Income	\$ 39,780	\$ 45,420	\$ 51,120	\$ 56,760	\$ 61,320	\$ 65,880	\$ 70,440	\$ 74,940

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 4000. This makes the match 4% or \$8,000 for the two homes. 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 \$8,000 match will be part of next year's budget. Two qualified candidates (property owners) have been identified and their applications are currently being reviewed by the TDHCA. The approval process will take 3-4 weeks. If TDHCA approves the candidate applications, this will be twentieth (20th) and twenty-first (21st) HOME grant houses to be built in Smithville since 2003. Construction will take 6-9 months.

- 8) **City of Smithville Sales Tax Update** - Below are the sales tax allocations for August 2019 vs. August 2018 (retail sales made primarily in June). This data reflects RETAIL sales of goods and services subject to LOCAL sales tax. Our sales tax payment (receipt) for August was \$55,210. This represents a **6.58% INCREASE** in our net monthly payment compared to the same time last year. With back-to-school and the Holiday season around the corner, I remain confident that the current improvement trend will continue. 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 \$381,736 (approximately 1.80% higher or \$7k above last year's year-to-date performance). See below for a comparison. Remember...SHOP LOCAL - it makes a difference!!!

Bastrop County Sales Tax Allocation - August 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%	\$683,124	\$668,811	2.14%	\$4,978,710	\$4,867,064	2.29%
Elgin	1.50%	\$193,728	\$192,500	0.63%	\$1,492,840	\$1,443,505	3.41%
Smithville	1.50%	\$58,843	\$55,210	6.58%	\$381,736	\$374,969	1.80%
County Total		\$935,696	\$916,521	2.05%	\$6,853,285	\$6,685,538	2.45%

City Manager Update (8-9-19) - continued

9) FEMA DR-4332 (Hurricane Harvey) Hazard Mitigation Grant DENIED – The City of Smithville’s \$1.8M FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP DR-4332) request for drainage improvements along NW 2nd from Gresham to SH95 was DENIED. There were 565 applications submitted with 91 projects selected (primarily along the coastline) for HMGP DR-4332 funding. Two-hundred-fifty-one (251) projects were selected as alternate projects and 223 projects were not selected – Smithville fell into this category. As you know, multiple businesses and residences along NW 2nd Street, Olive Street, Gresham Street, and Main Street have experienced repetitive flooding over the past 3-4 years. The existing terrain in this area is extremely flat with elevations typically varying between 0.2% to 1.0%. The primary means of storm water collection is through a combination of open road ditches, curb and gutter, and an existing storm sewer system (storm sewer sizes vary between 12-30 inches in diameter) that drains west into an existing road ditch along FM 2571 which conveys runoff to Gazley Creek. The storm sewer collection system along NW 2nd Street serves an approximate 25-acre drainage area. During heavy rainfall events, the existing storm sewer system, ditches, and streets are overwhelmed and unable to convey storm water runoff resulting in multiple business and residential flooding. Had the FEMA HMGP grant for DR-4332 been approved, a new storm sewer system would have helped alleviate flooding in this area. The City will continue to seek grant funding for this project. It is a long shot but there is a new FEMA funding opportunity opening soon for DR-4416 – October 2018 flooding event in Travis County. This project could potentially be awarded even though the City of Smithville was not directly impacted by the event.

10) Smithville Public Library Summer Reading Club Finale – The Smithville Public Library held its Summer Reading Club Big Finale party on Wednesday, July 17, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at Riverbend Park. The FREE celebration of summer readers brings partners from the City of Smithville Parks and Rec, SVFD, SPD, and SISD’s Child Nutrition Department to provide a day of fun with water slides, rides, crafts, and lunch in the park for about 200 people. Reading certificates were presented to all participants. Funding for the Finale was provided by the Friends of the Library, with partial support through a grant from the Union Pacific Foundation. After the Finale, the kids headed over to the Rec Center for a planetarium show co-sponsored by the Rec Center, Lions Club, and Scott Saunders/Farmers Insurance. The event featured four 45-minute programs on “The Sky Tonight”. For many of the 130 people who attended, this was a first chance to experience a planetarium show. One of the biggest values the Library brings to our community is the education of our youth. It was nice to see so many kids involved in the summer reading program. The library has hosted this program / event for the past 40+ years! Thanks to all the staff (and volunteers) who helped make this event a success (SEE PHOTOS). Great job!

11) SH95 Utilities Relocation - Request for Funding Assistance Under SB-1512 - The SH95 expansion project cost is an estimated \$7M with a 20% match that TXDOT has agreed to cover. TXDOT has also agreed to manage the project. The increase in our funding request from the previous award of \$3.4M in 2014 is due to an expanded project scope to accommodate the increase in traffic upon completion of the new junior high and athletic complex and the current cost of materials and services required to complete the project. CAMPO/TXDOT funding will pay for the roadwork (including shoulders, sidewalks, lighting, and a middle turn lane), but will NOT pay for the estimated \$2.7M cost for utilities relocation. Earlier this year, our request to the US Economic Development Administration (USEDA) for funding assistance was denied. We are now in the process of applying to the USDA for a Loan/Grant program for utility relocation (and upgrade of the old system), however, the maximum potential grant award through that program would be 75% of the loan value for the entire project. In addition, the City is seeking funding assistance under SB-1512. During the 86th Legislative session, SB 1512 amended Section 203.092 of the Texas Transportation Code to establish provisions for utilities relocation at the expense of the state. These provisions pertain to specific conditions for which the City of Smithville would qualify. Specifically:

- population of less than 5,000
- financial condition that prevents the municipality from being able to pay the cost of relocation
- at least five (5) disaster declarations made by the president of US in the six-year period preceding the proposed date of the relocation

The City cannot afford to pay the \$2.7M cost to relocate the SH95 utilities as such payment would adversely affect the ability to operate or provide essential utility services to our customers. Our annual budget is \$11.7M with \$8.8M in bonded debt. The \$2.7M cost for utilities relocation represents 23% of our overall budget and 40% of the Utility Fund budget. As such, the City of Smithville has made a formal request to TXDOT that the cost for utilities relocation be included as part of the planned improvements to SH95 in Smithville at the expense of the state. Click icon below.



City Manager Update (8-9-19) - continued

12) Keep Smithville Beautiful (KSB) Recognized by Keep Texas Beautiful - The Keep Smithville Beautiful (KSB) organization was recently recognized in a feature article published by Keep Texas Beautiful. KSB has been an integral partner together with the City of Smithville, the R.D. Latham Cultural District, the Lost Pines Artisans Alliance (LPAA) and the Smithville Independent School District (SISD) in many projects that showcase Smithville's creative and conscientious spirit. In the past year, KSB has been involved in:

- Public Art Programs
- Wayfinding and Informational Signs
- Main Street Art Projects
- Eco Fest
- Household Hazardous Waste Community Cleanups

The Public Art program, kick-started through National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) funding, has been a terrific way to bring the community together to communicate and to be their best creative selves. Titled "Easy as ABC: Arts Bridging Community," this project was all about getting people involved and making sure public art was located throughout the entire community. Smithville residents were asked to help select five historic figures for the "Legacy Portrait" (this was subsequently augmented with funding from the Texas Commission on the Arts, adding three more legacy portraits to the mural), and to discuss the people, events, and places that were included in the "Smithville Possibilities" murals, as well as encouraging everyone to assist six artists in the actual creation of the various public artwork. Click on the following link for more information → <https://ktb.org/ktb-blog/keep-smithville-beautiful-murals-murals-everywhere-and-other-projects-too>

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

The 2nd ANNUAL HEALTH FAIR & JOB FAIR will be held this **Saturday, August 10, 2019** at the Rec Center from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm for those interested in healthcare and healthcare industry jobs in the Smithville Area. Acadian Ambulance will be offering physicals. There will also be classes, health vendors, and information for job seekers. Classes include "stop the bleed", pain management, and chiropractic health. The event is sponsored by the Tower's Nursing Home, the Chamber's Economic Development Committee, the Smithville Public Library, the Smithville Whole Health Partnership, Wesley Nurse Program & the Smithville Community Clinic.

The AUGUST CITY COUNCIL MEETING will be held on **Monday, August 12, 2019** at City Hall (317 Main) at 6:00 pm.

The AUGUST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MIXER will be hosted by RALPH-LAND GROUP at 300 Short Street on **August 15, 2019** from 5pm-7pm.

The SISD JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RIBBON CUTTING & OPEN HOUSE will be held on **Wednesday, August 21, 2019** from 5:00-6:30 pm. The facility is located at 287 SH95.

SISD CLASSES begin **Monday, August 26, 2019**. Drive careful!

1ST PUBLIC HEARING on Tax Rate and City Council Budget Workshop – **Wednesday, August 28, 2019 @ City Hall (5:00 pm)**.

The next BEST COUNTY-WIDE BREAKFAST will be hosted by the Bastrop EDC on **Friday, August 30, 2019** from 8:00-9:30 am. (Location TBD).

CITY OFFICES will be CLOSED on **Monday, September 2, 2019** in observance of Labor Day.

2ND PUBLIC HEARING on Tax Rate and City Council Budget Workshop – **Wednesday, Sept. 4, 2019 @ City Hall (5:00 pm)**.

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

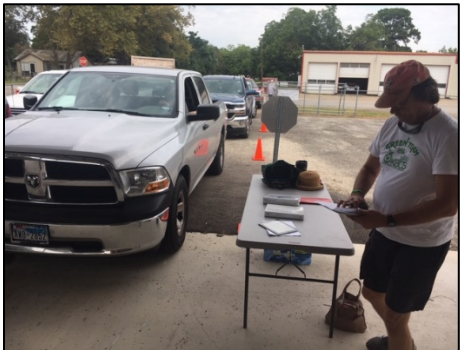
-- Robert --

PHOTOS – 8/9/19

City Street Paving on Whitehead, McSweeney, and Old Uptown Road



Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) and Paint Collection Event @ 109 Taylor Street



Smithville Public Library Summer Reading Finale Event @ Riverbend Park



PHOTOS – 8/9/19 (continued)

City Electric Crew Trimming Tree on Loop 230 and Replacing Transformer Behind 100 Main



Forest Service Fire-Fighting Helicopter at Smithville Airport



Photo of Towers Nursing Home Construction Progress



Junk Vehicle in City Right-Of-Way Ticketed by Smithville PD



New SPD Reserve Officer Steven Tyler Being Sworn-In



State of the City Presentation at Quarterly Chamber Luncheon



We're Making Progress.... Everything's gonna be OK!



City Offices **CLOSED**
Monday, September 2, 2019

