

City Manager Update – 6/6/25

June 1, 2025 marked the beginning of my 12th year as Smithville’s City Manager. It’s hard to believe 4,020 days have passed since officially being hired for the position. 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, flag-gate, hurricanes, bridge failures, litigation, legislation, tax-hikes, trash talks, COVID-19, and a host of other issues over the past decade---all while trying to improve our infrastructure 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 [2025 Atlantic Hurricane Season](#) which will run until November 30, 2025.

Summer is upon us and triple-digit temperatures are just around the corner. As we prepare for higher temperatures in Central Texas, take time to recognize and prevent heat-related illnesses while at work or home. Heat-related illnesses kill more people each year than earthquakes and hurricanes combined. Heat stress-related medical conditions occur when excess heat is allowed to build in the body over time. These include:

Sunburn: A reddening of the skin caused by excess sun exposure. Treatment: Avoid further sun exposure, cool area with water, use a non-oil-based moisturizer if needed.

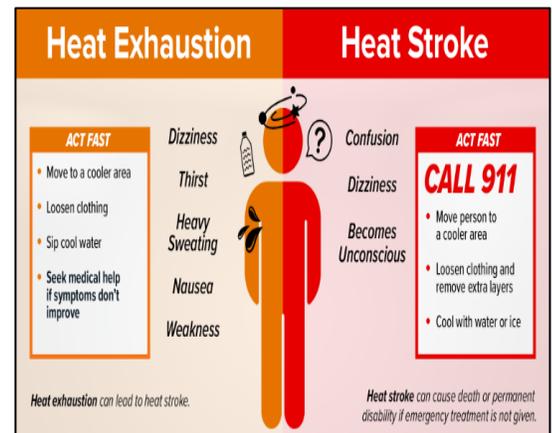
Heat Rash: Excess moisture on the skin causes sweat glands to become clogged resulting in a rash. Treatment: Cool and dry the skin.

Heat Cramps: Muscle pain due to the rapid depletion of body salts. Treatment: Rest in a cool area. Drink plenty of water. Seek medical attention if pain persists.

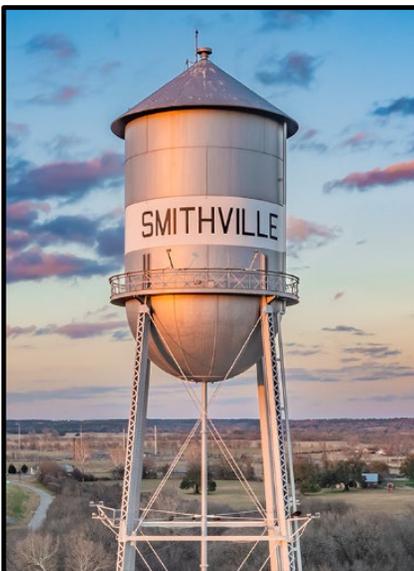
Heat Syncope: Fainting caused by heat exposure and transient vasodilation. Treatment: Lie down in a cool place. Elevate legs. If conscious, drink water.

Heat Exhaustion: Exhaustion brought on due to heat exposure and fluid loss. Symptoms include: heavy perspiration, extreme thirst, fatigue, headache, nausea, and sometimes diarrhea. A person experiencing heat exhaustion is going through severe dehydration. Treatment: Lie down in a cool area, drink cool water, slightly elevate legs, remove excess clothing, and sponge down with cool liquid. If no improvement is seen within 30 minutes, seek medical attention immediately.

Heat Stroke: Heat exposure causes malfunction in portion of the brain that monitors and controls internal body temperature. During heat stroke, the core body temperature of the victim is approximately 105-110 F. Symptoms include red or flushed skin that feels hot to the touch, altered mental status (may be combative), rapid pulse, and possible absence of sweating. Treatment: This is a very serious condition. Call “911.” While awaiting medical assistance, rapidly lower a victim’s body temperature through ice-water baths, cold compresses, fan, etc.



Recognizing the warning signs and symptoms of heat stress and taking preventive control measures can greatly reduce the risk of heat-related illness. For additional information, visit [KXAN-Austin Heat-Related Illnesses](#).



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). 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 (3) 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. Our current city-wide water storage capacity is approximately 1.6 million gallons. The monthly base rate for residential water service in Smithville is \$18.00 (which includes the first 2000 gallons) plus \$4.50 for every 1000 gallons of water used thereafter. Note: An average family of 4 uses approximately 400 gallons of water per day and 12,000 gallons / month. With the \$18.00 base rate included, this equates to an average water bill of \$63.00 / month.

City Manager Update – 6/6/25 (continued)

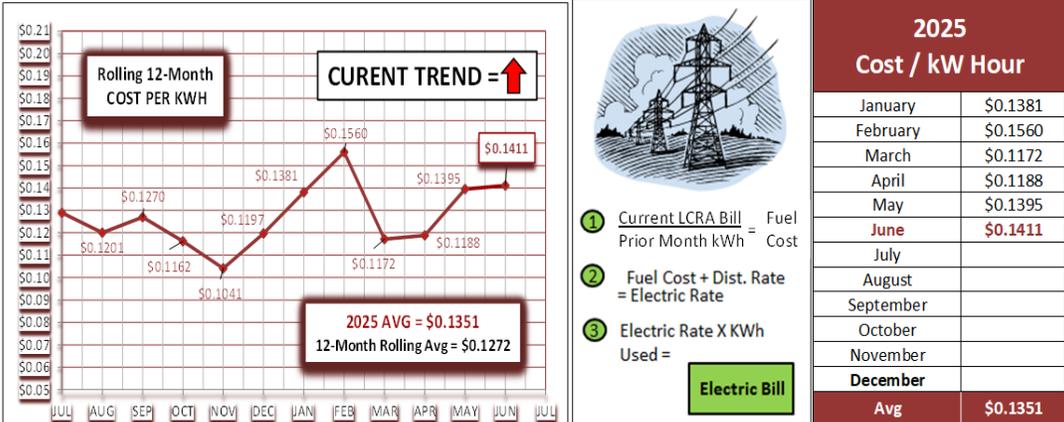
Below is a list of accomplishments, issues, and planned activities since my last update:

1) 2025 Bastrop Central Appraisal District (BCAD) Preliminary Estimate of Assessed Property Values Received – The City of Smithville received official notice from BCAD communicating the *preliminary* estimate of property value(s) within the city limits. The total assessed property value (net taxable minus exemptions) for Smithville in 2025 is \$474,007,121. This represents an 0.2% increase (\$948,848) over last year’s net taxable value of \$473,058,263. Based on the city’s current tax rate of \$ 0.588952 per \$100 valuation, this could bring in an additional \$5,588 of revenue to the FY25/26 General Fund - barring any adjustments given to citizens who protest and win their appeals, added exemptions, etc. As of 5/29/25, there are 284 out of 2,823 properties (10%) still under ARB review. The average SF1 home market value DECREASED from \$257,655 to \$243,843. The number of over-65 residents who qualify for the property tax freeze INCREASED from 464 to 500. This equates to a loss of potential revenue of \$112,522 to the City with an average savings of \$225.04 per qualified over-65 applicant. Final property values (i.e., the certified tax roll) won’t be out until the July/August timeframe. These values are what drive the No-New-Revenue Tax Rate (aka the effective tax rate) which is used to calculate the total tax rate. Below is a comparison of BCAD assessed values and City of Smithville tax rates from 2019 to 2025.

Year	Assessed Valuation	% Change in Value	Avg Home Value	Avg City Tax Paid	M&O Rate	I&S Rate	Total Tax Rate	% Change
2025	\$474,007,121	0.20%	\$243,843	\$1,436	TBD			
2024	\$473,058,263	4.77%	\$257,655	\$1,517	\$0.361372	\$0.227580	\$0.588952	7.29%
2023	\$451,537,121	14.45%	\$236,410	\$1,298	\$0.376543	\$0.172400	\$0.548952	0.004%
2022	\$394,511,444	20.20%	\$208,432	\$1,144	\$0.383085	\$0.165893	\$0.548930	-0.01%
2021	\$328,207,972	12.44%	\$186,277	\$1,023	\$0.419400	\$0.129600	\$0.549010	0.002%
2020	\$291,892,810	6.06%	\$170,086	\$934	\$0.446627	\$0.102434	\$0.549000	-3.52%
2019	\$275,208,274	10.97%	\$162,541	\$925	\$0.452515	\$0.116505	\$0.569020	0.004%

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. Fuel costs vary month to month and are based upon utility generation, transmission, line loss, and service fees. The cost per kWh for residential customers in JUNE will be \$0.1411. This represents an **1.14% INCREASE** compared to the MAY cost per kWh of \$0.1395. Fuel costs are typically higher during the summer months and the higher temperatures will increase both consumption and demand. As such, some citizens may not be able to pay or become angry that their bill “skyrocketed”. Utility customers can make payment arrangements if their account is not over 30-60 days past due. Under no circumstance will the City disconnect power to an occupied residence when the temperature is above 100° F. The Texas Public Utility Commission (PUC) provides energy conservation tips → <https://www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/facts/Save.aspx> to help reduce consumption which in turn will help citizens save money. Below you will find a “rolling” 12-month residential cost per kWh comparison chart.

City of Smithville Residential Cost Per kWh – JUNE 2025



Note: Fuel & Power Cost Recovery Factor + City Distribution Fee* (\$0.0550) = Cost / kWh
 *Residential Distribution Fee = \$0.0550/kWh (Effective October 1, 2023). Non-Resident (i.e., service outside city limit) Distribution Fee = \$0.0650/kWh

City Manager Update – 6/6/25 (continued)

- 3) **City of Smithville Receives \$50,000 Recycling Grant from HEB** – This City of Smithville received a grant from HEB in the amount of \$50,000 to purchase a new baler for mixed paper, it can also be used for white paper if we can come to an agreement with other local entities (e.g., Smithville ISD). The grant also included funding for the electrical upgrade needed for the baler, new signage, and a mobile ramp to load our “sellable” materials. This grant was obtained through Keep Texas Recycling (KTR) who has been a great partner for the City of Smithville. With help from KTR and HEB, the City of Smithville hopes to inspire other small towns to start their own recycling program while improving our own operational capability and efficiency. (SEE PHOTOS)
- 4) **19th Annual Smithville-Crawford Municipal Airport Fly-In Held** - The 19th annual Fly-In was held on Saturday, May 10, 2025 at the Smithville-Crawford Municipal Airport. The day was filled with airplanes, hot-air balloons, pilots, games, candy drop, raffle prizes and great food. Approximately 1,200 people attended the 4-hour event. Special THANKS to Sandy Meyerson, the Airport Advisory Board, Chamber of Commerce, Smithville VFD, City of Smithville, and a host of community volunteers who made this annual event possible. (SEE PHOTOS)
- 5) **2025 Smithville ISD Lock and Key Ceremony Held** - A Lock & Key Ceremony was held on Tuesday, May 29, 2025 at Veteran's Memorial Park to honor those high school seniors who graduated and enlisted in the United States Armed Service(s). SISD Class of 2025 graduates **Anthony Hernandez** and **Julio Mar Medina**, were recruited by the US NAVY to become nuclear submariners. It is estimated that the US Navy will invest approximately \$325k to train these young men to serve our Country. Mayor Sharon Foerster, SISD Superintendent Cheryl Burns, VFW Commander Stephen Barthelme, Councilman Jimmy Jenkins, and several City employees joined family members to honor these young men. A lock for each senior was placed on the Veteran's Memorial Park fence. The key will remain with the future servicemen and the lock will not be removed until they return home.
- 6) **Special-Called City Council Meeting / Budget Workshop #1 Scheduled** – The City Council will hold a Special-Called Meeting / Workshop on **Wednesday, June 18, 2025** from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm at City Hall (317 Main) to discuss Wastewater Expansion options with a company based in Georgetown, TX named [reUse](#). This workshop is a follow-up to the special-called council meeting held on 4/24/25 to introduce [advanced membrane bioreactor \(MBR\) technology](#) and its potential applications for the City of Smithville. The reUse team will present a detailed overview of cost, financing options, and implementation plans that have been tailored to meet the city's long-term wastewater infrastructure goals. This will also be the 1st of four (4) budget workshops. The key driver for initiating the budget process is the receipt of the certified final property values from the Bastrop County Appraisal District (BCAD). By law, these values must be received by the taxing entities no later than July 25, 2025. Last year, the preliminary appraisal values changed seven (7) times before the final Certified Appraisal Roll with Effective Tax Rate Assumptions was released. This year, the preliminary values have been updated four (4) times thus far since being released on March 26, 2025. These values drive both the M&O and I&S portion of our tax rate. They also impact our debt service. So, we are basically dealing with a moving target which makes it very difficult to publish meaningful and accurate numbers prior to the publication of the final certified roll in July. Having said this, there are several workshops planned where I will provide an update regarding the current budget (e.g., revenue vs. expenditures, debt obligations, Tax Note spending, etc.) that will include an overview of current projects, initiatives, and future plans. The city staff will be fully engaged during the entire process and there will be ample opportunity for citizens and councilmembers to provide input / feedback.
- 7) **Langford Community Management Services, Inc. to Provide Comprehensive Plan Update** - Langford Community Management Services, Inc. (LCMS) will be providing an update of the current comprehensive plan progress, an overview of the new Resilient Community Planning (RCP) Engagement Portal, and next steps during the **June 9, 2025** City Council meeting. The [RCP Engagement Portal](#) is a new online platform designed to keep our community informed, engaged, and empowered. The Portal is designed to gather ideas, questions, and suggestions from the public. At this time, access is limited to the Langford planning team, City Council, P&Z, Comp Plan Stakeholders, and city staff during the initial review phase. The portal will be rolled out to the public once the review team has had a chance to send comments back to LCMD. Jerri Conrado will be attending the Council meeting to provide the update on progress which will serve as Public Meeting #2. By mid-July, Langford expects to submit Milestone #3 to GLO, with the updated 50% DRAFT of the comprehensive plan, which will also allow the public to rank the following potential chapters for “Additional Study”: Connectivity – Bridging Urban Divides; Expanding Parks and Green Spaces; and Opportunity Zone Development Study.

City Manager Update – 6/6/25 (continued)

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

Monday, June 9th: - The June CITY COUNCIL meeting will be held at City Hall beginning at 6:00 pm. Click for link to access the [COUNCIL AGENDA and DATA PACKET](#)

Sunday, June 15th: - FATHER'S DAY.

Wednesday, June 18th: There will be a SPECIAL-CALLED CITY COUNCIL MEETING / BUDGET WORKSHOP at City Hall (317 Main) from 5:00-7:30 pm to review the reUse proposal for our wastewater expansion and discuss FY25/26 preliminary budget. Click link for [WORKSHOP AGENDA](#).

Thursday, June 19th: - The Smithville Area Chamber of Commerce MONTHLY MIXER will be hosted by MOSAIC ART & HOME and PANAMA ROSE & TWIG (located at 216 and 218 Main Street respectively) from 5:00-7:00 pm.

Thursday, June 19th: - City Offices will be CLOSED in observance of JUNETEENTH. City Hall office hours before and after the Holiday will be from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Friday, June 27th: - The monthly BEST BREAKFAST will be held at Quinto Patio (114 NE 2nd) in Smithville from 8:00 am to 9:30 am.

Tuesday, July 1st: - P&Z COMMISSION meeting will be at City Hall (317 Main) starting at 6:00 pm.

Friday, July 4th: - City Offices will be CLOSED in observance of INDEPENDENCE DAY. City Hall office hours Monday-Thursday will be from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Have a great weekend!

-- Robert --

PHOTOS ON NEXT PAGE

PHOTOS - 6/6/25

Smithville Innovation Center Construction (Underground Stormwater Catch Basin) – 400 Fawcett



Memorial Day Ceremonies – Laying of the Wreath and VFW Annual Luncheon to Honor the Fallen



City of Smithville Receives \$50k Grant from Keep Texas Recycling / HEB



Pre-K Voting Day @ City Hall – Donuts or Broccoli???



CRAYOLA Crayon TV Commercial Casting Call @ the Smithville Recreation Center



PHOTOS - 6/6/25 (continued)

SISD Lock & Key Ceremony – 5/29/25 (Anthony Hernandez and Julio Mar Medina Recruited by the NAVY)



City Crews Removing Fallen Trees Due to Severe Thunderstorm on 6/4/25 - (Over 3" of Rainfall in 1-Hour)



2025 Smithville Municipal Airport Fly-In – May 10, 2025

