

City Manager Update – 7/11/25

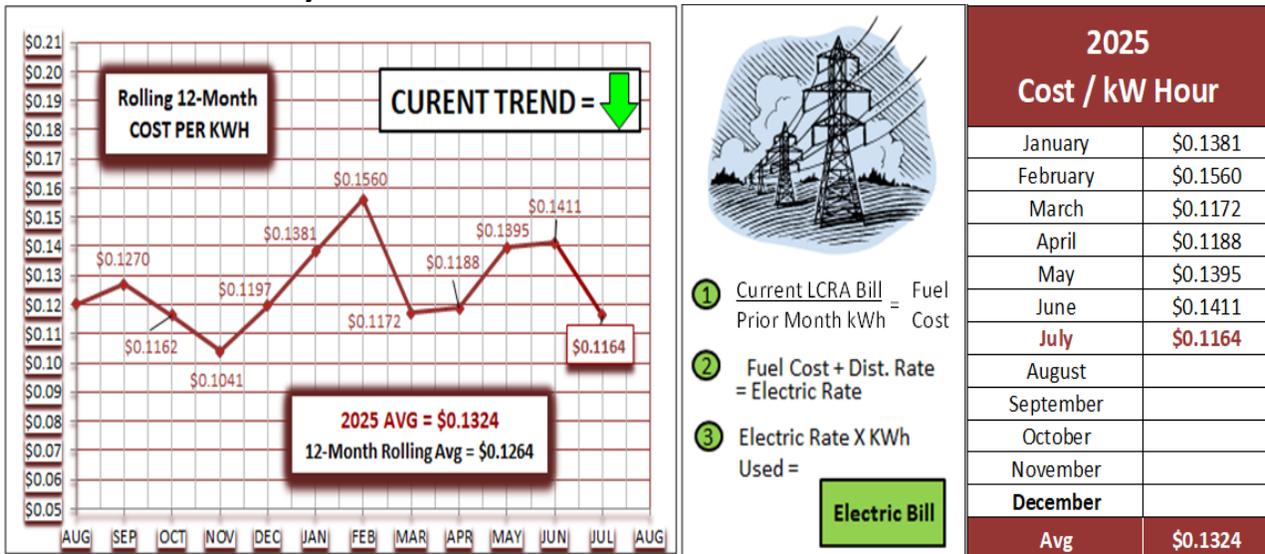
Our thoughts and prayers are with those impacted by the recent catastrophic flooding events in the Hill Country. The loss of life, the disappearance of loved ones, and the destruction are truly tragic. Monetary donations can be sent to the [Kerr County Flood Relief Fund](#). We received 4.56" of rain over the 4th of July weekend with over 3.5" inches of rainfall in 2-1/2 hours on Saturday, July 3rd. There were no power outages and we experienced only very minor flooding. Water accumulated in streets, yards, and fields resulting in multiple complaints from citizens on social media about inadequate drainage (e.g., Loop 230, NE 7th, Dorothy Nichols Rd, Bishop, Turney, Garwood, MLK Jr. Blvd, Gentry, Jones Rd, Caldwell Lane, Wilkes Circle, Marburger, RVICS). I had about 2" of standing water in my back yard as well. Once the rains stopped, the standing water in the streets, bar ditches, and culverts took a couple of hours to subside / recover. To my knowledge, only one residence on Marburger had water enter their home and I am thankful that the city did not have to deal with property damage and the catastrophic loss of life. On a positive note, the recent drainage improvements in the downtown area and at Oak Meadows performed admirably. The city will continue to look for funding opportunities to improve our drainage infrastructure with several major projects still in the pipeline (e.g., RVICS, Garwood/Bishop and MLK Jr. Blvd). Smaller drainage improvement projects are also planned for NE 7th and SE 2nd in the coming weeks (weather permitting).

I hope everyone had a Happy (and safe) 4th of July. The downtown parade and fireworks at the VFW were well-attended. I live on the Hill and the fireworks discharged inside the city limits and county along FM2571 wreaked havoc on my dogs. I'm sure other dog owners within the city limits experienced similar issues. More importantly, some Veterans with PTSD have a difficult time coping with the loud artillery-type fireworks. The Smithville PD published notice on social media in advance of the 4th of July that discharging fireworks inside the city limits was against city ordinance and punishable by fine. Four (4) fireworks-related compliant calls were received the evening of the 4th with the Smithville PD issuing two (2) warnings. Two (2) calls were cleared as the officers on patrol were unable to locate the alleged offenders. No citations were issued.

Below you will find a list of accomplishments, issues, and events since my last monthly CM update / report:

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 JULY. 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 JULY will be \$0.1164. This represents an **17.53% DECREASE** compared to the JUNE cost per kWh of \$0.1411. Fuel costs are typically higher during the summer months and the higher temperatures will increase both consumption and demand. Utility customers can make payment arrangements if their account is not over 30-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 and a fuel cost comparison chart.

City of Smithville Residential Cost Per kWh - JULY



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

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- 2) **Crayola Crayon Commercial Filmed in Smithville** - The Crayola Crayon commercial completed filming downtown on Thursday, July 10, 2025. The commercial featured a marching band, colored smoke canisters, streamers and many local extras. The production company utilized two local restaurants (Olde World Bakery and Sweet Tea Café) to feed the cast and crew. They also donated \$2k to the SISD band and rented space at the Bluebonnet Room and Dance Studio for the production team as their home-base while filming. Some members of the production stayed at the Katy House during the casting call in June. The shoot required closure of Main Street between the 100 and 200 blocks which served as their “set”. Sidewalks remained OPEN during entire shoot to allow patrons to access those businesses who had parking in front of their buildings impacted. Unfortunately, the production company said they will NEVER film again in our town due to the exorbitant fees that had to be paid to some business owners to get the 100% approval / sign-off required to authorize the Main Street closure. This was very disappointing to hear as the business owners who stayed open had to be paid more than those who were actually shut down. The film industry standard for sign-offs is 80% and the city will be modifying the film permit guidelines accordingly to prevent this very scenario. Smithville was the first certified “Film-Friendly” community in the state of Texas and this was the 120th production filmed since 2008. Feature films, independent films, commercials, web-series, music videos, and documentaries bring cast and crew members to our community who spend their dollars locally providing a short-term economic boost.
- 3) **Special-Called City Council Meeting / Budget Workshop #1 Held** – The City Council held a Special-Called Meeting / Budget Workshop on **Wednesday, June 18, 2025** from 5:00 pm to 10:30 pm at City Hall (317 Main) to provide an update regarding the current budget status (e.g., revenue vs. expenditures, debt obligations, Tax Note spending, etc.) that included a top-level summary of current projects and future plans. A detailed overview of each of the city’s twenty-two (22) cost centers was provided to communicate the department function(s), headcount, total spend, challenges, and future needs. The “Tell Your Story” charts presented by the city staff provided insight to what each department does, how they do it, and the challenges they currently face. The 5-1/2 hour meeting was well-received by those in attendance and those who watched (or re-watched) the workshop via the city’s [YouTube Channel On-Line](#). The City Council instructed the City Manager and staff to reduce the proposed FY25/26 budget by 5% (\$836k) of the \$16.7M FY24/25 adopted budget. Copies of the presentation materials can be accessed by clicking on the following links→ [Budget Workshop #1 Presentation](#) and [Tell Your Story Charts](#). The next Budget Workshop is scheduled for 5:00 pm on **Wednesday, July 23, 2025** at City Hall (317 Main).
- 4) **Comprehensive Plan Community Engagement Portal Launched** - The City of Smithville invites all residents, business owners, and community stakeholders to review and provide feedback on the DRAFT Resilient Comprehensive Plan, now available through the city’s [On-Line Community Engagement Portal](#). The comprehensive plan initiative is being funded through a \$300,000 grant from the Texas General Land Office (with no cost to the city) and will help guide Smithville’s growth and development over the next 10 to 20 years. It focuses on strategies that promote sustainability, equity, and resilience, while addressing key issues such as land use, housing, infrastructure, economic development, parks and trails, downtown revitalization, stormwater management, and historical preservation. The final version of the Comprehensive Plan is expected to be adopted in December 2025. This effort is led by the City of Smithville, in partnership with Langford Community Management Services, Inc. Ongoing community input is essential to creating a plan that reflects shared values and goals. Please review the DRAFT plan, share your thoughts, and help us shape Smithville’s future as we manage growth.
- 5) **2024 TCEQ Annual Drinking Water Quality Report Published** - The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) issued the 2024 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for the City of Smithville for the period of January 1 to December 31, 2024. 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](#). There were no radioactive, microbial, inorganic, or organic chemical contaminants in excess of those found in naturally-occurring sources of water and no active or pending violations. A copy of the [2024 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report](#) was included in the July utility bill and is available on the City’s website. In addition, a water quality report flyer was included in the monthly utility bill. For additional information, contact Edward Balusek or Robert Tamble on 512-237-3282.



City Manager Update – 7/11/25 (continued)

- 6) **TXDOT Mowing Update** - TXDOT contractors will begin mowing Hwy 71, SH95, Loop 230, and most of the arterial roadways this month to include FM 2571, FM 535, FM 153, and FM 2104. TXDOT only mows the Right-of-Way (ROW) twice a year (typically July and November) unless a line-of-sight hazard exists. Unfortunately, line-of-sight hazards must be called into the district office to resolve and it is often easier to have City crews just take care of the issue. Since TXDOT only mows twice a year, the City hired a local contractor to help keep the Loop 230 and Hwy 71 triangle (by the airport) mowed on a regular basis. This has helped the eastbound entrance to our community look more attractive and well-maintained.
- 7) **City of Smithville Sales Tax Update** - Below are the sales tax allocations for July 2025 vs. July 2024 (retail sales made primarily in May). This data reflects RETAIL sales of goods and services subject to LOCAL sales tax. Our sales tax payment (receipt) for July is \$77,447. This represents an **20.10% INCREASE!!!** in our net payment compared to the same time last year. Currently, the City of Smithville is leading the pack with the greatest percentage increase among the three municipalities. All sales tax receipts within the county are trending slightly higher compared to last year. Smithville’s year-to-date sales tax payments total \$553,783. Sales tax dollars are used to make street / road repairs and help pay for community services like FIRE and POLICE. Please remember to SHOP LOCAL - it makes a difference!!!

Bastrop County Tax Allocation Summary - JULY 2025

County/City	Current Rate	Net Payment This Period	Comparable Payment Prior Year	% Change	2025 Payments Year-To-Date	2024 Payments	% Change
Bastrop	1.50%	\$1,051,036	\$1,035,037	1.54%	\$7,696,196	\$7,334,541	4.93%
Elgin	1.50%	\$364,712	\$337,770	7.97%	\$2,537,904	\$2,351,958	7.90%
Smithville	1.50%	\$77,447	\$64,484	20.10%	\$553,783	\$512,316	8.09%
Bastrop County	0.50%	\$847,686	\$720,335	17.67%	\$5,542,264	\$5,073,053	9.24%

- 8) **Special-Called City Council Meeting / Budget Workshop #2 Scheduled** - The next FY25/26 budget workshop will be held on **Wednesday, July 23, 2025** at City Hall (317 Main) beginning at 5:00 pm. The FY25/26 proposed tax rate and preliminary budget will be reviewed in detail and an action item update from the first budget workshop will be provided. Representatives from the City Staff and members of the City Council will share their Top 3-5 projects and plans with the community. There will also be an in-depth review of expenditures from each of the twenty-two (22) cost centers to communicate the budget cuts necessary to achieve the 5% Year-Over-Year (YOY) spending reduction target the City Council has instructed the city staff to achieve. During the next 6-8 weeks, the staff and I will continue focusing the majority of our time evaluating cost savings / cost cutting measures, identifying new sources of revenue, prioritizing plans / projects, strategic initiatives, and developing a balanced budget. In the meantime, I would ask that citizens email the City Council regarding any projects or areas of focus they would like to see included as part of our annual operating plan / budget. The workshop agenda and DRAFT budget presentation materials will be available 5-7 days in advance of the meeting. A copy of the budget workshop schedule is provided below.

FY25/26 Budget Workshop Schedule			
Date	Description	Location	Time
6/18/2025	Budget / Council Workshop #1	City Hall	5:00 PM
7/23/2025	Budget / Council Workshop #2	City Hall	5:00 PM
8/20/2025	Budget / Council Workshop #3	City Hall	5:00 PM
9/3/2025	Budget / Council Workshop #4	City Hall	5:00 PM
9/8/2025	Adopt FY25/26 Tax Rate / Budget	City Hall	6:00 PM

City Manager Update – 7/11/25 (continued)

9) **Notice Regarding Delinquent Utility Accounts** – A concerted effort will be made to reduce the number of past-due utility accounts by limiting the number of days a customer is allowed to be delinquent. In the past, many utility customers with delinquent accounts (exceeding 90-days) were allowed to continue receiving services if the customer made payment arrangements. With 10% late penalties accruing each month (and continued utility usage), many customers simply could not honor their agreements. As a result, utility services were disconnected and the delinquent account(s) sent to a collection agency. This is revenue the City will very likely never recover. In fact, the City has incurred more than \$850k in lost utility revenue (charge-offs) associated with delinquent accounts over the past 10-years. Currently, there are 165 utility customers who are over 30-days late paying their utility bill with \$65k owed to the City. Beginning **October 1, 2025**, utility customers with past due accounts greater than 30-days will have their service disconnected. There are three (3) exceptions to this rule:

- 1) Temperatures over 100°F in the summer;
- 2) Temperatures below freezing 32°F in the winter; and/or
- 3) A life-threatening medical condition (certified by a licensed medical professional) that would be exacerbated by disconnecting service.

[Chapter 13 – “Utilities”, Article 13.03.003 \(4\)](#) of our City Ordinance states: “Services shall be interrupted to any customer whose account is five (5) days delinquent. In the event that the 5th day falls on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday or holiday, service interruption shall occur on the first following working day.” We are not quite ready to ratchet down to 5-days as this situation was not created overnight. Ultimately, establishing a 30-day past-due limit will benefit both the customer and the City by reducing the delinquent utility customer’s balance to something manageable while enabling a more reliable payment of utility services provided. Payment arrangements can be made due to adverse circumstance but you must contact the City and honor any commitments negotiated. St. Vincent de Paul, Combined Community Action (CCA) and local churches all offer financial assistance. Notice was provided to all utility customers in the July utility bills. The city staff will send out additional notices well in advance of the October 1, 2025 deadline to give customers with past due balances additional time to settle their accounts. Please contact the City Utility Department on (512) 237-3282 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Below you will find a list of events / meetings planned over the next few weeks in Smithville:

The next **Smithville City Council** meeting will be held on **Monday, July 14, 2025** (6:00 pm) at City Hall (317 Main). Citizens can access the livestream meeting via [City of Smithville YouTube Channel](#). Click → for [Agenda / Council Data Packet](#).

The **July Chamber of Commerce Mixer** will be on **Thursday, July 17, 2025** at Consuella’s (110 NW 2nd St.) from 5-7:00 pm.

The **Smithville Chamber of Commerce Annual Casino Night** will be held on **Saturday, July 19, 2025** from 6pm-10pm at the Smithville REC Center (106 Royston).

There will be a **Special-Called City Council Meeting / Budget Workshop #2** on **Wednesday, July 23, 2025** at City Hall (317 Main) beginning at 5:00 pm.

The next **Bastrop County BEST Breakfast** will be held on **Friday, July 25, 2023** in Bastrop and will be sponsored by the Bastrop County Appraisal District (BCAD) from 8:00 am to 9:30 am at **Chapala Fiestas** — 1067 State Highway 71, Bastrop.

The next Planning & Zoning meeting will be held on **Tuesday, August 5, 2025** at City Hall (317 Main) starting at 6:00 pm.

FYI....I will be on vacation **July 18-21st** to celebrate my 41st wedding anniversary.

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

-- Robert --

PHOTOS – 7/11/25

Crepe Myrtles in Full-Bloom at the Airport and Charleston Blvd



Dennis Walker Little League Concession Stand - Construction Progress (Est. Comp. Date = December 2025)



Career Tracks Innovation Center - Construction Progress (Est. Comp. Date = September 2025)



City Crews Working Around Town



Crayola Crayon TV Commercial Filmed on Main Street

