

City Manager Update – 4/5/24

This year’s Jamboree celebration is in full swing and marks the 65th year for the Critter. Click on the following links for the schedule and list of events → <http://www.jamboreesmithville.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/JamboreeCritter>. On behalf of the City of Smithville, I would like to extend a THANK YOU to the members of the Jamboree Committee for their efforts. This event takes months to plan and most folks in the community never give a second thought about what it takes to pull off a community celebration of this magnitude and duration. Last year approximately 27k people attended the 3-day event. Riverbend Park is looking great. Kudos to Edward Balusek and his team for paying attention to detail and going the extra mile mowing, weed-eating, and trimming trees at Riverbend Park. Edward’s crew will also be removing dirt and debris from the curbs and “gutters” along Loop 230. Loop 230 will be closed from 1:30 – 4:30 pm on Saturday, April 6th for the Jamboree parade. We will post on the city website and FB page communicating the Loop 230 closure and remind folks about the parade.

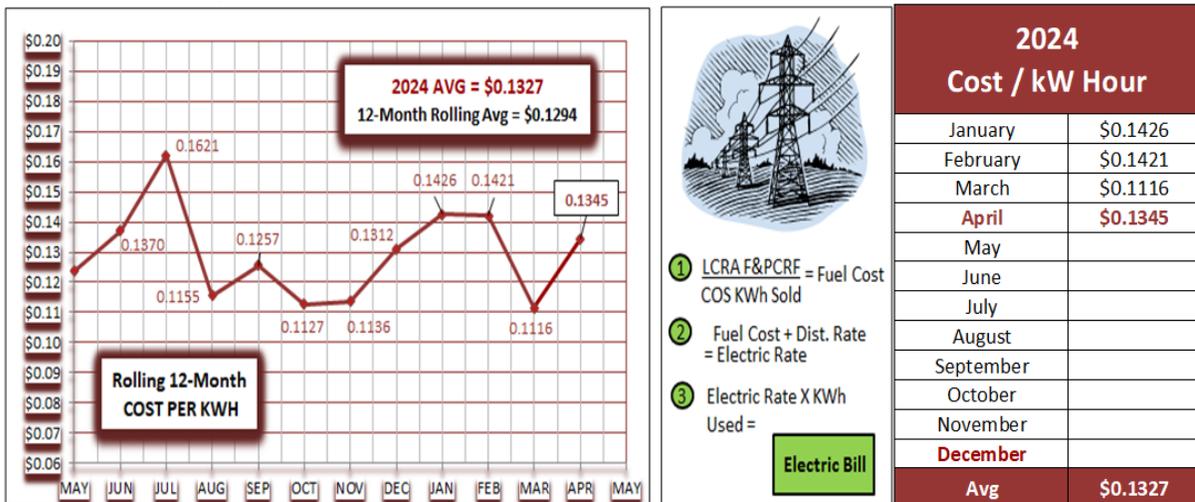
On April 8, 2024, a total solar eclipse will cross North America, passing over Mexico, the United States, and Canada. The eclipse will begin in Texas at approximately 1:30 pm. A total solar eclipse happens when the Moon passes between the Sun and Earth, completely blocking the face of the Sun. Within the Central Texas region, there are county / city offices and school districts that are planning to close on this date because of the influx of traffic and visitors. For example, Hays County is estimating that they will have one million additional people in their county on this date. However, I am not aware of any city or school closures planned in Bastrop County. Safety is the number one priority when viewing a total solar eclipse. Except for the fleeting moments of totality during a total solar eclipse, observers should always use eclipse glasses or an alternative safe solar viewing method, such as a pinhole projector, to view the sun. For more information click on the following link from NASA → [2024 Total Solar Eclipse](#) or Austin Statesman – [5 Tips for Viewing Eclipse](#).

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

1) New Code Compliance Officer Hired - The city recently hired a new Code Compliance Officer. **Luis Gonzalez** comes to us with a background of 30+ years in the Information Technology field working in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Luis and his wife, DeeDee, relocated to Smithville in June 2021 and have adjusted well to small town living. Throughout his career, Luis has contributed to impacting business outcomes through effective organization, prioritization, and execution of key objectives. His goal is to bring about greater accountability, improved code management oversight, and increase efficiencies. Luis can be reached on (737) 677-9448 and is available to answer questions or discuss any code compliance issues or concerns citizens may have. Welcome aboard Luis!

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 April. LCRA 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 April will be \$0.1345. This represents an **20.48% INCREASE** compared to March’s cost per kWh of \$0.1116. On average, the annual cost per kWh for electric service in Smithville is between 12-13 cents with the average household using 1,200 kW per month (\$156).

City of Smithville Residential Cost Per kWh – APRIL 2024



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 – 4/5/24 (continued)

- 2) **2024 LCRA “Steps Forward Day” Project Scheduled** – The City of Smithville received notice from to the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) communicating that our “Steps Forward Day” project application(s) was approved. As such, volunteers from LCRA will gather on Friday, **April 12, 2024**, to work on community projects throughout LCRA’s service territory. Examples of potential projects include cleaning parks, painting pavilions, planting trees or doing carpentry work. Last year, LCRA volunteers trimmed trees and cleaned around gravesites at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. LCRA also painted the interior of the restrooms at Riverbend Park. This year LCRA volunteers to repaint 53 ornamental lights in the downtown area. The city will provide the supplies and equipment necessary to support the project(s) with LCRA providing the manpower (typically 20-25 volunteers). The City of Smithville is fortunate to have LCRA as a community partner. Programs like Steps Forward and the Community Development Partnership Program (CDPP) have definitely made a positive impact.
- 3) **2024 City of Smithville Councilmember, Mayor, and SISD School Board Elections** – Candidate filing for the 2024 City of Smithville General Election is complete. A list of candidates and the position(s) for which they are running is provided below. Election Day is Saturday, May 4, 2024. Early voting begins April 22, 2024 and ends April 30, 2024. Voting will be held at the Smithville Recreation Center (106 Royston). Click on the following link for additional information (e.g., sample ballot, polling locations, etc.) → <https://www.bastropvotes.org/election-information-2/upcoming-elections/>. As a reminder, all political signs on private property must be removed within 7-days after the election per City of Smithville Code of Ordinances, Chapter 14 - Zoning, Part 3, General Development Standards, [Section 3.7.2 - “Political Signs”](#). Good luck to all the candidates!

City Council, Mayor, and SISD Trustee Candidates For 2024 General Election

	Position	Candidate	Term Lenth	Term Expires	Election Type	Candidate Status
City of Smithville	Mayor	Sharon Foerster	2-Years	May 2024	General	Incumbent
		Tom Etheredge				Challenger
	Alderman - Place 4	Mitchell Jameson	2-Years	May 2024	General	Incumbent
		Dane Garrison				Challenger
	Alderman - Place 5	Cathy Meek	2-Years	May 2024	General	Challenger
Brandon Dunham		Challenger				
SISD	Trustee - Place 3	Casey Hanchey	3-Years	May 2024	General	Challenger
		Bryan Jones				Challenger
	Trustee - Place 4	Chelsa Vinklarek	3-Years	May 2024	General	Unopposed

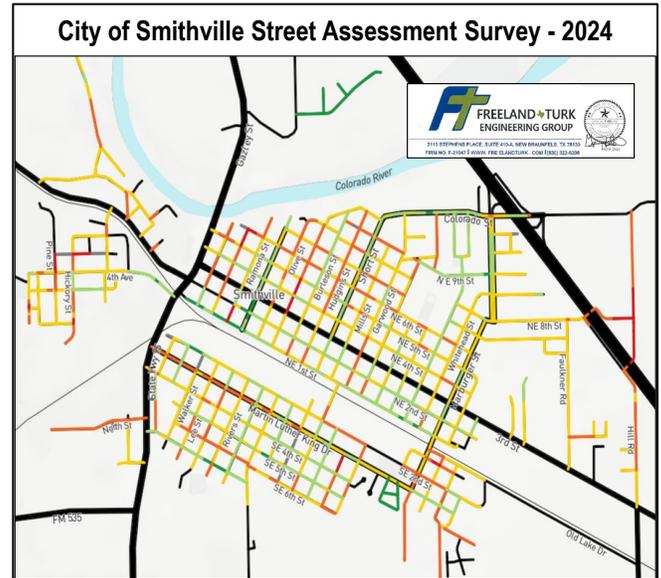
NOTE: Councilmember Janice Bruno (Place 5) is not seeking re-election. Councilmember Tom Etheredge (Place 2) is running for Mayor but has 1-year remaining on his term which expires in 2025. SISD Trustees Nancy Towry (Place 3) and Alan Hemphill (Place 4) are not seeking re-election.

- 4) **FY22-23 Financial Audit Completed** – Singleton, Clark & Company, PC completed the annual audit of the City of Smithville's 2022-23 financial statements during the month of March. The results of the audit indicate that assets exceeded liabilities by \$16,491,660 at the close of the fiscal year. The total net position of the city increased by \$168,035 (General Fund increased \$463,178 and Utility Fund decreased \$295,143). The City’s governmental funds reported a combined fund balance of \$2,627,924, an increase of \$695,692 in comparison with the prior year. The City’s General fund balance increased by \$259,506 to end the year at \$1,596,631. The City’s Fund Balance Policy states the City should maintain an overall Unassigned Fund (reserve) Balance of not less than 3 months of regular General Fund operating expenditures. At fiscal year-end 2022-23, the city had a reserve balance of 3.2 months. The General Fund’s required fund balance was \$1,461,580 while the actual unassigned fund balance was \$1,566,627. The City’s total debt decreased by \$4,146 during the fiscal year. The total debt outstanding at the end of the fiscal year was \$7,891,065. The reason for the decrease was that the only new debt issuance during the year was for an amount less than the regularly scheduled principal reductions on the existing outstanding debt. The new issuance was a \$1,300,000 tax note. The City was also required to perform a Single Audit for the fiscal year due to federal expenditures being greater than \$750,000. Federal awards/grants for the fiscal year totaled \$1,689,263 (e.g., GLO-CDBG MIT, TDHCA HOME Grant, TXDOT TASA). There were no findings or questioned costs found during the Single Audit. Overall, the City received a “clean” financial audit. Jack Clark will be presenting the results of the financial audit during the April 8, 2024 City Council meeting.

City Manager Update – 4/5/24 (continued)

5) **City-wide Street Repairs and Paving Project Update** - The City of Smithville contracted with Freeland Turk Engineering Group, LLC (FTEG) to conduct a [City-wide Street Assessment](#) and sign inventory. FTEG utilized [Roadbotics](#) technology to collect street and sign data back in December 2023. The city has approximately 40-miles of city-maintained public roadways and over 600 street signs within the city limits. Roadbotics provides a rating category at approximately 10' intervals along every roadway and assigns a level for each point. Each point is combined along a roadway segment, typically block to block, or intersection to intersection (such as alleys) and the collective segment is assigned an average rating. There are 850 street segments in the Smithville assessment. A description of the ratings along with the percentage of Smithville street segments falling into those categories are described below:

- **Level 1 "Green"** = 1.00 to 1.49 - 3.76% (32 of the 850 segments) were rated Level 1. No or very minor surface damage. This road may be a newly paved roadway.
- **Level 2 "Light Green"** = 1.5 to 2.49 – 22.35% (190 of the 850 segments) were rated Level 2. Minor surface damage, no critical issues. This road is starting to show typical wear and tear.
- **Level 3 "Yellow"** = 2.5 to 3.49 – 49.18% (418 of the 850 segments) were rated Level 3. Appearance of surface distresses. Important surface issues starting to show.
- **Level 4 "Orange"** = 3.5 to 4.49 – 21.65% (184 of the 850 segments) were rated Level 4. Significant damage or emerging critical failures. Damage beginning to intensify.
- **Level 5 "Red"** = 4.5 to 5.00 – 2.12% (18 of the 850 segments) were rated Level 5. Major surface damage and/or critical surface failures present on road surface.
- **Not Rated "Gray"** = No Score - 0.94% (8 of the 850 segments) were not rated. Unpaved or dirt roadways will fall into this category. Occasionally, a severely deteriorated paved roadway, or a chip sealed roadway with light colored or brown colored gravel will fall into this category.



This is the second time FTEG has performed a street assessment survey for the City of Smithville. In 2020, FTG issued a similar maintenance plan that identified various maintenance activity on 106 street segments that were rated a “4” or “5”. Out of those 106 street segments, 56 segments were identified for significant restoration and repaving. Since then, the City has made significant progress towards working on the streets and has performed maintenance activities on 26 out of the 56 severely rated street segments, or taking on a project about every other month for the last four years. In addition to repairing the street segments identified in the Roadbotics report, the City has also performed maintenance on areas that were not covered by report such as Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Oak Hills Cemetery, Harper Street, Walker Street, and King’s Way (RVICS). A list of road paving and repair projects will be published next month. The Bastrop County Maintenance Department (who owns the paving equipment) will be doing the work during the summer months with support from the City of Smithville. Pot-hole repairs will continue throughout the community as pot-holes are identified. Citizens can report a pot-hole using the Smithville [SEE/CLICK/FIX](#) link on the City Website or by downloading the SCF app to their smart phones.

6) **PHI Air Medical Transportation Contract / Renewal Agreement Approved** – On 3/11/24, the City Council voted unanimously to renew its contract agreement with PHI Air Medical to provide “no cost” emergency medical air transport of citizens with life-threatening injuries / illnesses that reside within the Smithville City Limits. The annual fee of \$12,859 is based on providing coverage to approximately 1,837 households (as identified by the most current list of residential utility customers). The plan will cover all Smithville citizens while they are in PHI Service Area (i.e., Bastrop County) at a cost of \$7.00 per household. For those citizens with insurance (including Medicare patients), the agreement will cover all co-pays, deductibles, and remaining balances for PHI transports. For those without insurance, the agreement will cover payment in full. For those citizens on Medicaid, PHI will receive a payment from the state. Citizens can upgrade to a full national household membership for \$30 per year that will provide coverage outside of the Bastrop County service area. On average, the cost for medical air transport in large metropolitan areas is \$10-15k per flight. However, the average cost for citizens in Bastrop County for medical air transport is \$45-50k. In 2023, there were six (6) PHI Air Medical transports in Smithville. The contract will be valid through April 30, 2025.

City Manager Update – 4/5/24 (continued)

- 7) **Recycling and Residential Garbage Survey Launched** – Let your thoughts be heard by responding to the Solid Waste Management Survey. Do you want once (1X) or twice (2X) a week garbage pick-up? Do you want to keep the leaf and limb service? Do you use the recycling center, brush dump, or monthly bulk pick-up? Click here → to access the [SOLID WASTE SURVEY](#). The survey opened on April 1, 2024 and will close on **April 30, 2024**. A report will be presented at the May 13th City Council meeting (6PM at City Hall, 317 Main Street). Paper copies are available at City Hall, the Smithville Public Library, and the Smithville Recreation Center. Please return all paper copies to City Hall (317 Main Street). Thank you in advance for your participation!
- 8) **Virtual Control Tower System Installed at Smithville-Crawford Municipal Airport** – The City of Smithville purchased and installed a virtual control tower system at the Smithville Crawford Municipal Airport named “Virtower” through TXDOT Aviation’s Routine Airport Maintenance Program (RAMP). The RAMP grant pays for 90% of the \$6k annual cost making the annual payment \$600. Virtower monitors key airport operational parameters including takeoffs, landings, touch and go’s, pavement utilization, and based aircraft operations. It also provides a quick and easy noise complaint investigation tool by identifying the make, model, and pilot operating the aircraft tied to the complaint. In the past week, there have been 255 take-offs and landings by a variety of civilian and military aircraft (see summary below). Virtower will prove to be a very useful tool to quantify the number and type of aircraft that utilize this very valuable community asset. It will also help provide baseline data for justifying airport improvements (e.g., parallel taxiway, runway extension, etc.) when applying for future TXDOT Aviation and/or FAA grants. Special THANKS to Sandy Meyerson (84R Airport Operations Manager) for installing the system.

Take-Offs and Landings at Smithville Municipal Airport – (3/27/24 to 4/3/24)

Landings		Take-Offs		Totals	
Single Engine	0	Single Engine	221	Single Engine	221
Multi Engine	0	Multi Engine	1	Multi Engine	1
Business Jet	0	Business Jet	12	Business Jet	12
Military	0	Military	5	Military	5
Military Helicopter	0	Military Helicopter	16	Military Helicopter	16
TOTAL	0	TOTAL	255	TOTAL	255

- 9) **EIA-861 Annual Electric Power Industry Report Submitted** – The City submitted the 2023 Energy Information Administration's (EIA) Form EIA-861, "Annual Electric Power Industry Report." The annual report identifies the revenue generated, Megawatt Hours (MWh) used, line loss, and the number of customers for whom the City of Smithville provided power during 2023. Here is a summary of electricity usage from 2018-2023:

City of Smithville EIA-861 Annual Energy Use Report

City of Smithville Electric Power Use	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenue (\$USD)	\$5,053,000	\$4,959,000	\$4,967,000	\$5,286,000	\$5,540,854	\$5,886,000
Megawatt Hours (MWh) Billed	39,798	38,299	39,044	38,458	40,400	39,863
Average # of Customers*	2194	2221	2248	2272	2289	2300
LCRA Megawatt (MWh) Purchased	43,765	43,206	43,432	42,730	44,731	43,691
% Line Loss (Includes unmetered use)	9.06%	11.36%	10.10%	10.00%	9.68%	8.76%
*Includes residential, commercial, and customers with service outside the city limits	Average Line Loss					9.83%

As you can see by the data above, we had a slight increase in the number of utility customers served in 2023. We added 11 new customers for a total of 2,300. The City’s consumption in megawatt hours (MWh) was about the same in 2023 compared to 2022. There was an increase in revenue of \$345k compared to the prior year. Our line loss in 2023 was calculated at 8.76% (a 9.51% DECREASE from 2022). This includes losses due to inefficient transformers, uninsulated lines, and unmetered sales / use (e.g., street lights). EIA Electric Surveys are mandatory under the authority of the Federal Energy Administration Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-275), as amended. The annual EIA-861 report was compiled and submitted well before the April 30, 2024 deadline. Nice work Nadine Harris and Rosie Johnson!

City Manager Update – 4/5/24 (continued)

10) 2024 Bastrop Central Appraisal District (BCAD) Preliminary Estimate of Assessed Property Values – 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 2024 is \$479,955,113. This represents an 6.3% increase (\$28,317,827) over last year’s net taxable value of \$451,637,286. Based on the city’s current tax rate of \$ 0.548952 per \$100 valuation, this could bring in an additional \$155,451 of revenue to the FY24/25 General Fund - barring any adjustments given to citizens who protest and win their appeals, added exemptions, etc., which typically equates to a 2-3% reduction of the total assessed value. The average home value increased 8.3% from \$236,085 to \$255,778. 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.

BCAD Property Valuation & City Tax Rate Comparison - PRELIMINARY									
Year	Assessed Valuation	% Change in Value	Avg Home Value	Avg City Tax Paid	M&O Rate	I&S Rate	Total Tax Rate	% Change	
2024	\$479,955,113	6.27%	\$255,778	TBD					
2023	\$451,637,286	14.48%	\$236,085	\$1,290	\$0.3765	\$0.1724	\$0.5489	0.00%	
2022	\$394,511,444	20.20%	\$208,432	\$1,144	\$0.3831	\$0.1659	\$0.5489	-0.01%	
2021	\$328,207,972	12.44%	\$186,277	\$1,023	\$0.4194	\$0.1296	\$0.5490	0.00%	
2020	\$291,892,810	6.06%	\$170,086	\$933	\$0.4466	\$0.1024	\$0.5490	-3.52%	
2019	\$275,208,274	10.97%	\$162,541	\$925	\$0.4525	\$0.1165	\$0.5690	0.00%	

11) City Council to Recognize BJ Anderson’s 100th Birthday – On Monday, April 8, 2024, the City of Smithville will recognize Mr. Benjamin “BJ” Anderson proclaiming April 15, 2024 as “BJ ANDERSON DAY”. BJ Anderson was born in Smithville TX on April 15, 1924 to Lee and Estella Anderson and celebrates his 100th birthday on April 15, 2024 and graduated from Smithville Colored High School in 1942. He was drafted to the Army Air Corps in 1943 where he served in the 477th Bomber Group, which was supported by the Tuskegee Airmen, and was honorably discharged from the Army in 1946. BJ is married to Della Vine Martin Anderson and they had six children (Tilda, Rogers, Bruce, and Wilbert Anderson, Ben Henson, and Gerald Owens), and 12 grandchildren, 23 great grandchildren, and 21 great, great grandchildren. Mr. Anderson graduated from the Chestnut Cooking and Baking School in Bastrop, TX, which was established to provide training to African-American soldiers upon their return from military service and prepared soldiers to work in the restaurant industry and as caterers at a time when no other employment was possible in Bastrop County due to segregation. He later worked as an automotive repairman for 40 years for Ford and Chevrolet dealerships, retiring at age 62. Mr. Anderson was celebrated as one of the 2023 Unsung Heroes by the Bastrop County African American Cultural Center. Happy 100th Birthday Mr. Anderson!!!

12) City of Smithville Comprehensive Plan Key Organization Stakeholder Meeting – The City of Smithville Comprehensive Plan Key Organization Stakeholder meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at the Smithville Recreation Center (106 Royston) from 5:00-7:00 pm. Ms. Jerri Conrado (Langford Community Management Services) will be leading a planning session with one representative from each key stakeholder organization. This meeting is not meant to be an open discussion forum. However, the public is welcome to attend to observe the planning session. The planning session will focus on the following:

- Key stakeholder introductions (background/representation/expertise)
- Review and discuss key stakeholder survey results
- Present a summary of existing plans/studies/data collected (assessment will be attached)
- Discuss Social Media/PR/Community Engagement Schedule
- Review the draft of community survey questions

The Comprehensive Plan will address resiliency, future land use, zoning, downtown revitalization, economic development, historic preservation, infrastructure, parks & recreation, community health, and housing by obtaining community input / feedback through a series of stakeholder meetings over the next 6-12 months. Plan development, revisions, public meetings, and final adoption will take another 6 months. Additional information regarding the past comprehensive plans is available on city website → <https://www.ci.smithville.tx.us/186/Development-Plans>

City Manager Update – 4/5/24 (continued)

13) Council to Consider Awarding Contract for City Warehouse Expansion – The City of Smithville published a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) in the Bastrop Advertiser on March 6, 2024 and March 13, 2024 for a general contractor qualified to build a 20'x50' expansion of the city warehouse (located at 1001 SE Martin Luther King Drive) to add additional office space and meeting room. The City received two (2) sealed proposals that were reviewed by City staff on Wednesday, March 20, 2024. Experience, work performance, capacity to perform, and cost were the criteria used by the City staff to evaluate / differentiate each contractor's qualifications. **RES Construction66, LLC** was the lowest bidder at \$87,517 that received the highest score with 85.00 points. As such, it is the decision of the evaluation team to recommend the contract for the city warehouse expansion be awarded to RES Construction66, LLC. The project is being funded by ARPA and residual monies from the 2022 Tax Note. This will be an item for discussion and action during the Monday, April 8, 2024 City Council meeting.

There are several events / activities planned in the next few weeks in Smithville:

The **65TH ANNUAL [SMITHVILLE JAMBOREE](#)** will be held on **April 4-6, 2024** at Riverbend Park.

The next **CITY COUNCIL** meeting will be held on **Monday, April 8, 2024** at 6:00 pm (City Hall). Click for link to access the [COUNCIL AGENDA AND DATA PACKET](#).

NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATIONS WEEK is **April 8-12, 2024**. National Public Safety Telecommunications Week (NPSTW), has been set aside to recognize and celebrate the work of telecommunicators helping to save millions of lives every day. This week-long event is a time to celebrate and thank those who dedicate their lives to serving the public by ensuring prompt and safe response of our local law enforcement, firefighters, and paramedics. The Smithville PD has a great team of dedicated Telecommunicators (Dispatchers) who effectively communicate and multi-task in emergency situations. Let's acknowledge their hard work and dedication!

There will be a city-sponsored **COMPOST MAKING WORKSHOP** at the Community Gardens (107 SW 2nd) on **Wednesday, April 10, 2024** from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm.

The **LOCAL CANDIDATE FORUM** will be hosted by the Smithville Chamber of Commerce on **Thursday, April 11, 2024**. The forum will be held at the Smithville Recreation Center from 6:00–8:00 pm.

The next **CITY-WIDE GARAGE SALE** will be held on **Saturday, April 13, 2024** from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. Maps will be available online and at the Chamber of Commerce

The next monthly **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MIXER** will be held on **Thursday, April 18, 2024** (from 5-7:00 pm) sponsored by Subway, EH Mercantile, and surrounding businesses.

The next **CHAMBER QUARTERLY LUNCHEON** will be held on **Wednesday, April 24, 2024** (from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm) at VFW Hall (557 NW Loop 230). Representatives from Buescher State Park will be speaking. Register for the luncheon online at www.smithvilletx.org.

EARLY VOTING begins **Monday, April 22, 2024** and continues through **Tuesday, April 30, 2024** at the Smithville Recreation Center (106 Royston). Election Day is Saturday, May 6, 2023.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONAL'S DAY is **Wednesday, April 24, 2024**. Many thanks to Jennifer Lynch (City Secretary) and all the City's “administrators” for everything they do.

The first **MUSIC IN THE PARK** event will be held on **Thursday, April 25, 2024** from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Gazebo.

There will be a city-sponsored **RECYCLING CENTER WORKSHOP** at the Smithville Recycling Center (404 Royston) on **Saturday, April 27, 2024** from 10:30 am to 11:30 am.

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

-- Robert --

PHOTOS – 4/5/24

2024 Jamboree Preparations



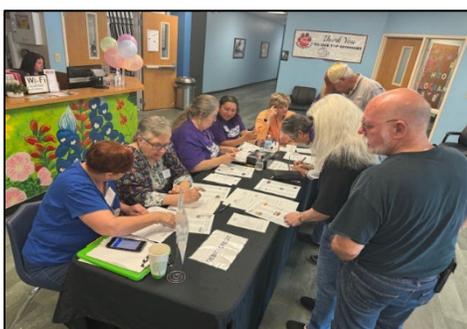
Riverbend Park Entry Archway Construction



Smithville Robotics Team Headed to State Competition!



2024 Empty Bowl Project!!!



RVICS Annual City Employee Appreciation Breakfast

