

Mayor's Message

By Mayor Chris Riley

STATUS OF HIKE & BIKE TRAIL ROUTE

At present, the Hike & Bike trail is still planned to run through Raymond Rimkus Park and the Natural Area, stopping at the bridge under Bandera Road. (The original \$933,000 grant involved a trail twice as long to connect to Crystal Hills Park). There has been significant opposition to this plan, including a petition signed by 787 citizens and placement of "Don't Pave the Natural Area!" yard signs. These yard signs were removed by the city according to their interpretation of the sign ordinance, but the city attorney later clarified (the sign ordinance was amended) that the citizens have a right to place these and other signs in their yards.

Additionally, in September, the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Planning Organization offered the city the option to apply the \$933,000 federal grant for the needed Evers Road improvements instead of for the Hike & Bike trail. The city council rejected this option by a vote of 3 to 2.

Presently, TXDOT has approved the proposed trail route submitted by the City, subject to the City obtaining an "encroachment agreement" with SAWS, since the paved trail is going over SAWS' recycled water and sewer line easements. If approved by SAWS, the entire plan will be submitted to TXDOT in Austin to request a final letter of authority. Once this letter is received, the city will solicit construction bids which will be advertised for 30 days. The staff will review the bids, make a recommendation and bring to city council for approval to enter into a contract. Once the city council accepts a bid for the Hike & Bike trail project, the city will be fully



Mayor Chris Riley

committed to this project. This could be as early as January, 2015.

TOWN HALL MEETING – SATURDAY, JAN. 24, 2015

8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. – Conference Center

Thomas Jefferson called town hall meetings "the wisest invention ever devised by the wit of man for the perfect exercise of self-government". Following the city's two planning sessions with the American Institute of Architects planning grant, it was my recommendation to continue our citizen involvement with town hall meetings. Our 5th annual Town Hall Meeting since 2011 will take place on Saturday, January 24th. Our prior Town Hall meetings brought about the following initiatives: (2011) – Initial discussion of the need to expand our fire, police and administrative facilities was discussed with a citizens committee established and street maintenance tax renewal election held; (2012) – Municipal Facilities Capital Improvements became a reality with a \$7 million bond package voted on by our citizens in May, 2012 (The fire station will open in January, 2015); Beautification of Bandera road was discussed by Jim Carillo with the idea of entry-way monuments and landscaping (this goal was completed this year); VIA Primo Bus Rapid Transit planned extension into Leon Valley was discussed (service began in November, 2013). In 2013, updates were given on the bond

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Did You Know?

• Calling all Volunteers – The Board of Adjustment needs volunteers to make a quorum.

The Board of Adjustment (BOA) is an eight member board which has the power to review and approve variances from zoning ordinance requirements and administrative decisions that create unnecessary hardships. Unlike other boards or commissions, the BOA makes the final decision on items that come before it. Meetings are called only as needed. Visit www.leonvalleytexas.gov for an application to fill out and return to city hall.

• Top 10 Complaints Received by the City's Code Compliance Department (Jan – June, 2014):

signs on public right of way, high weeds, graffiti, animals at large, requests to borrow animal traps from the city, dead animals, trash & debris, overgrown vacant lots, failure to register animals, and obstruction of right of way.

• Municipal Facility Capital Project Expense Report: Total Budget to date:

\$7,878,393. This includes \$367,144 additional expense above the original \$7 million bond, plus additional technology enhancements for the new fire station and remodeled facilities totaling \$382,587; new furniture for fire, police and administration departments, \$97,000; and renting space to move staff out during construction, \$30,000. All amounts have been budgeted.

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Lion's Roar

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project, Bandera road monuments, Huebner Creek flood, Hike & Bike trail grant and Crystal Hills park, Library Children's wing and the Huebner-Onion Homestead. Also three adhoc committees were formed: Branding, Communication & Festival. In 2013, the branding committee achieved a new logo and city seal and the festival committee discussed expansion of the 4th of July annual event and adding another festival to bring people to Leon Valley (in 2014, the expanded 4th of July was a huge success as was the Jazz in Leon Valley event in October). In 2014, the city's capital projects as well as the Huebner Onion Homestead master plan were discussed. The successful efforts from the branding, communication and festival committees were also reported. Additionally, the 2010 Strategic Goals established by our citizens for the city were reviewed, updated with citizen input, and approved by city council in May, 2014.

Please plan on attending this annual event. It is a great way of participating in your government and helping to guide the direction of our city. The town hall meeting is democracy in action. The agenda has not been set as of this newsletter's deadline. Hope to see you there!

Did You Know?

Continued from cover

• Walk with the Mayor – Saturday, January 10th, 2015.

Meet at 8:30 am at the Community Garden to walk to the proposed Silo park property on Huebner road next to the church. Or meet at 9:00 am at the Silo property.

Wishing you and your family a very happy and safe holiday season. City hall will be closed from December 24 through January 2nd, except for police and fire. At the request of our citizens, the library will be open Dec. 26, 27, 30 & 31, as well as Jan. 2 & 3.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call or email me at (210) 618-2092 or mayorriley@leonvalleytexas.gov.

Sincerely, Chris

Leon Valley Public Library

By: Sandy Shultz, Assistant Library Director

The Leon Valley Public Library holiday hours will be, as follows:

Wednesday, December 24CLOSED

Thursday, December 25.....CLOSED

Friday, December 26..... 10 am – 6 pm

Saturday, December 27 . 10 am – 2 pm

Sunday, December 28.....CLOSED

Monday, December 29.....CLOSED

Tuesday, December 30 .. 10 am – 6 pm

No Storytime Today

Wednesday, December 31

..... 10 am – 6 pm

Thursday, January 1.....CLOSED

Friday, January 2..... 10 am – 6 pm

Saturday, January 3 10 am – 2 pm

We will return to our regular hours starting Tuesday, January 5.

December 20th we will be holding a SNOWMAN CLASS for all ages. We will create a bean stuffed snowman complete with a scarf and hat! All ages are welcome, children will need an adult attending with them to help with tying, hot gluing, tiny detail work.

On Friday, December 26 and Saturday, December 27, we will have materials out to create thank you notes for your holiday goodies. Come relax on Wednesday, December 31 as we start movie day at 10:30 am. Movie TBA.

And remember that every Tuesday at 10:30 am is storytime. We typically read three books, sing and move a bit, and finish up with a craft. All ages welcome!

Leon Valley Public Library...come check us out!

TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN (TNR) PROGRAM

The City of Leon Valley's Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Program is up and running. This program will help all of us safely and humanely manage and reduce the outdoor feral cat population numbers.

Those interested in participating or just knowing more about the program are encouraged to attend a FREE training class hosted by the San Antonio Humane Society. The class will be held at the

San Antonio Human Society at 4804 Fredericksburg Rd. For more information please contact Jerry or Annette at 210-684-1391 or the San Antonio Humane Society Helpline at 210-877-9067.

We are also asking for donations of the following items: Cat food, blankets, magnetic bowls or trays. Cash donations are also acceptable which will assist with the neutering fee (\$20) per cat. Thank you for your help.

Citizen Concern

By: Paul Biever, Councilmember Place 5

Several of citizens have expressed their desire to stop the delivery of The Echo and some have noted that the paper is delivered to homes that do not pick up their copy, thereby creating a problem with trash. Mr. James Lee, Editor of The Echo, has expressed a willingness to stop delivery to those who do not want the newspaper. Please feel free to contact him at (210)695-3613 to report that you do not want the newspaper or to report locations where there is an accumulation of papers.



Councilman Paul Biever

You're Invited! Proposed Silo Park Public Hearings

The City has acquired a 3,839 acre parcel of land in the 7500 block of Huebner Road. A portion of the parcel was developed into a detention pond; however, there are approximately 1,439 acres remaining that may be developed into a pocket park for enjoyment by all Leon Valley citizens, and more specifically, the residents of the Canterfield and Pavona Place neighborhoods.

In order to determine how the citizens would like to see this area developed, the Park Commission will be holding two public hearings:

- **Tuesday, December 9, 2014, 7:00 pm**
- **Tuesday, January 13, 2015, 7:00 pm**

Both public hearings are to be held at the Leon Valley Conference Center, located at 6421 Evers Road. Please make plans to attend and offer your opinions on the development of this latest addition to our park system. Call Melinda Moritz at (210)681-1232 for additional information or questions.

City Council Committees

By Benny Martinez, City Council Place 4

One issue that I have become passionate about is our City Council Committees. I believe the committees are appointed by City Council and should report to City Council. This was done a few years ago and was somehow abandoned. I realize some committees meet on a regular basis and some as necessary. I would like to see committees come before City Council and make a formal presentation and advise us of your findings and recommendations regarding City business. These presentations will be scheduled as discussion items at future City Council meetings. You may note that the committees will also continue to come before City Council on a rotating quarterly basis and others on an as needed basis.

At the November City Council meeting Councilman Bieber made a presentation on the very successful Jazz festival. I believe the Festival committee should have made the

presentation and a recommendation to hold the 2nd Annual Jazz festival next October.

The City Council has the following committees: City Park Commission, Leon Valley Earthwise Living Committee, Community Events Committee, Leon Valley Storm Water Management Program, Bandera Road – CAG, Tree Advisory Board, Bond Oversight Committee, Branding/Identity Committee, Festival Committee and the Beautification Committee. Many of these boards and commissions have vacancies.

The Board of Adjustment is Statutory Tier 1 Board that has vacancies.

If you see a board or commission you have an interest in and would like to volunteer, please email mayorrriley@leonvalleytexas.gov.

One concern is the time it takes to bring an issue before City Council. As a City Council we need to be more

responsive and handle issues in a timely manner. The best solution is to return to two City Council business meetings a month, like we

have done for years. The “Coffee with the Mayor” is a great way for citizens to voice their concerns in a relaxed informal way. Items of concern will need to be placed on the agenda at a future City Council meeting possibly 15 to 45 days later. The Mayor and Councilmember Carmen Sanchez and I have heard your concerns. Please contact Councilmembers Bieber, Diaz and Ruiz and make your wishes known. I can be reached at b.martinez@leonvalleytexas.gov. As a City Council member, one must never forget, we work for you. **YOU ARE OUR BOSS.** Make your voice heard.



**Councilman
Benny Martinez**

Why is Economic Development Important to Leon Valley?

By Abraham Diaz, City Council Place 3

Have you ever heard a neighbor ask “Why doesn’t Leon Valley have an In-N-Out Burger”? Do you want to know how the Fiesta Dodge Property went from eyesore to having two businesses? How does Leon Valley get an In-N-Out Burger? What happened to the Fiesta Dodge Property? It’s called “economic development”.

Economic development can be defined a number of ways; but, basically, it is activity which works toward improving the economic well-being and quality of life of a community by supporting business establishment, growth and retention that will provide a growing and stable tax base. Economic development is about increasing the overall tax base – increasing sales and property taxes from the business community. Increases in this tax revenue will result in more funds for services for residents. In addition, increased tax revenues generated by businesses mean that the tax rate for local homeowners will remain low.

So, how does Leon Valley work toward maintaining a low tax rate? It does economic development!

According to The Retail Coach, a national retail analytics and locational intelligence firm that specializes in all aspects of retail market analyses and recruitment, Leon Valley is losing over \$700 million in retail sales. There are five sectors (general merchandise stores, full service restaurants, lumber and other building materials, miscellaneous retail stores, and radio, TV and computer stores) that have little or no presence here; therefore, consumers have to go to San Antonio and the surrounding area to spend money for those items and services. The sales tax that Leon Valley would get from those sales would be approximately \$14 million! So, as the City of Leon Valley works with its various partners to attract, grow and retain businesses, it focuses on creating opportunities for those five sectors to develop in the city. The City’s Economic Development Department (EDD) Director, Claudia Mora, and the Leon Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC) represent Leon Valley at conferences specializing in retail development. They meet with businesses in the five

sectors and present available properties and location ideas to attract retailers to Leon Valley.

The more exposure Leon Valley gets, the more opportunities our city has to attract businesses that will generate sales and property tax revenues.

In response to the questions above, EDD has been working to attract In-N-Out Burger to Leon Valley by speaking with them at the conferences. As for the Fiesta Dodge Property, staff worked with developers and the property owner to attract the businesses that are there now. In fact, on or about December 21st, the San Antonio Aquarium will open and be Leon Valley’s latest economic development project that started off as an idea and a meeting. In time, the city will see increased sales and property taxes from that property alone – all as a result of economic development.



**Councilman
Abraham Diaz**



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6400 El Verde Road
Leon Valley, TX 78238

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CITY COUNCIL

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Place 1 Ricardo Ruiz
Place 2 Carmen Sanchez
Place 3 Abraham Diaz
Place 4 Benny Martinez
Place 5 Paul Bieber

LION'S ROAR

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684-0720
Fire Department
Luis Valdez, Fire Chief
684-3219
Police Department
Randall Wallace, Police Chief
684-3215
Public Works
Melinda Moritz, Director
681-1232

CITY MEETINGS

All meetings at City Hall unless otherwise specified.

City Council
2nd Monday - 7:00 p.m.
Board Of Adjustment
Meets as required
Coffee with the Mayor
4th Saturday - 9 -11 a.m.
Community Events Committee
3rd Wednesday - 6:30 p.m.
Earthwise Living Committee
2nd Wednesday -
5:30 p.m. Public Works
Library Board
2nd Tuesday - 5:30 p.m. - Library
Park Commission
2nd Tuesday - 7:00 p.m.
Stormwater Committee
Quarterly, 1st Monday - 7:00 p.m.
Tree Advisory Board
3rd Wednesday - 6:30 p.m.
Zoning Commission
4th Tuesday - 6:30 p.m.
Community Advisory Group
Quarterly, 4th Thursday
Conference Center - 5:30 p.m.

CITY NUMBERS

Keep these numbers handy

Emergency Number for POLICE, FIRE and EMS 911
City Web Site Address
..... www.leonvalleytexas.gov
City Hall..... 684-1391
Animal Control & Code Compliance 251-1797
..... 204-9979
Fire 684-3219
Police 684-3215
CAT 684-ONIT (6648)
Human Resources 684-1391
Dead Animal Pickup 1- 800-800-5804
Public Works 681-1232
Library 684-0720
Waste Management
..... 1- 800-800-5804
Community Center Rental 684-1391 ext. 225
Senior Citizen's Club 522-9966
City Hall, non-emergency Police and Fire operations may be contacted at the above numbers Monday - Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Friday 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Closed weekends and holidays. Public Works Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

