



## Mayor's Message

By Mayor Chris Riley

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*"Success is getting what you want, happiness is wanting what you get"*  
- W.P. Kinsella

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### STATE OF THE CITY 2023

#### **BANDERA ROAD REDEVELOPMENT FROM 410 TO 1604**

- A big issue in Leon Valley has been what do we do with the traffic along Bandera Road? The City took on this question in 2017 when the City of Leon Valley, with the help of UTSA planning department, initially developed a boulevard concept, and presented it to the City of San Antonio District 7 Councilwoman Ana Sandoval and TXDOT. We have been working on this question for the last six years and have come up with a plan, after many public and stakeholder meetings, which is called the Parkway concept. Unfortunately, the boulevard concept was too large and did not fit in the Bandera road right-of-way, which added to the overall cost of the plan.

Generally, Bandera Road will expand by one lane in both directions. On both sides of Bandera Road, there will be protected pedestrian and bicycle pathways, which will be connected to the neighborhoods. People will be able to walk or bike on Bandera Road without risking their lives. There are other features to improve traffic flow such as R-CUTS (turning right and then driving down to turn left to reverse directions), closing some streets, and reducing the number of driveways into a business.

This is a 20 year project and is currently in the pre-shovel ready phase - completing the environmental assessment and developing a schematic design. After the final plan is completed, the cost of the project is determined and funds will need to be found, including right-of-way costs for our City and the City of San Antonio. As a long time member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization, I have been working to find support for funding from elected officials, including State Representative Lopez, State Senator Menendez and County Commissioner Rodriguez.

#### **HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS**

- The City has had increased problems with homeless individuals since 2016 and in the spring identified 11 homeless encampments in our city (that number has decreased). We have had fires resulting from these encampments in our wooded areas. The City Council passed a very strong ordinance prohibiting homeless persons from camping, lodging, soliciting or sleeping in any park, public median, street, drainageway, or right-of-way or on any private property without the permission from the property owner. But we knew we needed to do something to help people who were on the streets.

In June, we met with Bexar County and non-profit agencies who work with the homeless and others to try and come up with a plan. What can we do to help people who are unsheltered? As a result of that meeting, the County has reached out to ask if Leon Valley would be the pilot program from the suburban cities (there are 26 in the County) to work together

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## Mayor's Message

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on this issue. The County will hire two outreach coordinators through Haven for Hope and has asked the City to contribute towards that cost; that decision from the council is pending at the time of this article.

The statistic is it takes between 5-7 contacts with a homeless person in order for them to develop a relationship with the coordinators. The coordinators will identify who and where the homeless are in our city and determine what resources are available to them, including veteran's and other benefits. Many of our homeless are veterans who are suffering from the effects of war. The obvious problem with homeless is lack of affordable housing. Bexar County is discussing committing money towards adding more housing to address this county wide problem.

### **AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN – ARP FUNDS RECEIVED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FOR COVID RELIEF.**

– This balanced budget was adopted on September 5th and runs from October 1st, 2023 through September 30, 2024. The tax rate, adopted on September 19th, is the same rate as FY 23 at \$.48 cents per \$100 valuation. We had some challenges this year because we needed to increase salaries and benefits to stay competitive but Council also desired to reduce taxes. We went from a 1% property tax exemption to a 20% exemption (the maximum allowed by law). This 20% tax exemption will reduce the average annual property tax bill by \$126 for a homestead valued at \$204,000 and goes into

effect on your 2023 property tax bill.

We found we needed to make some cuts to the budget. Some of the bigger cuts were eliminating a medical integrated health fireman, reducing the Library days of operation from 7 days to 5 days, closing on Sundays and Mondays. We eliminated the Jazz Festival for next year and delayed a large number of capital projects until next year.

One of the major areas we are funding this year is the second leg of the Hike and Bike trail (\$1.9 million which is an 80% reimbursable grant from the Metropolitan Planning Organization) The City pays 20% plus engineering and environmental costs. When completed, our citizens will be able to walk or bicycle from Rimkus Park to the Bandera road bridge, along Huebner Creek, connecting to the Howard Peak Greenway. The Greenway is a county wide network of hike and bike trails. Phase one of the Hike and Bike trail is completed from Crystal Hills Park along Huebner Creek to the Bandera Road bridge.

Also in the budget is funding for a staff utilization study. The Council hired a company to determine if we have the right number of employees in police, fire and public works. This study will determine how many personnel are needed in order to do the jobs they are tasked with, but also to look at reorganization of departments to see if efficiency can be increased. As you know personnel costs drive the budget. This study will take approximately 4 months to complete, cost \$75,000 and most likely will impact council decisions in next

year's budget.

In general, our revenues are \$16 million and our expenditures are \$14 million plus capital expenditures. Our main sources of revenue are from property tax and sales tax receipts.

### **AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN – ARP FUNDS RECEIVED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FOR COVID RELIEF.**

The City received approximately \$1.5 million in both FY 22 and FY 23 for a total of \$3 million to be used in 4 areas: COVID retention, water and infrastructure, broadband and hazardous pay for employees. Council authorized purchase of (2) fire trucks, an ambulance, well generator, sewer line replacement, cardiac monitor, 3 power stretchers, the Just FOIA open records program, hazardous pay for employees, disposal supplies and \$50,000 for citizens to apply for utility reimbursements due.

### **SHORT-TERM RENTALS (STR)**

– Council has been discussing regulating STRs over the last several years and is now considering a draft ordinance from our city attorney. Some of the areas which may be included in an ordinance, are registration fees and penalties, limiting the number of people and cars in each STR, limiting the number of STR's on a street or area and payment of hotel occupancy taxes to the city. The Mayor and council will each redline the ordinance to see what the council can agree on going forward.

## VIA METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY

– Questions were raised this year by Council on whether the half cent VIA tax was getting our money’s worth – a due diligence review. The City was an original VIA member by voting to join the Authority in 1978. The city pays a half cent sales tax for VIA services which is approximately \$1.6 million per year. VIA fare box receipts are approximately \$200,000. These services include 6 fixed routes through our city (104 bus stops) and VIAtrans, which serves those in our community who are disabled or elderly who need to get to doctors and other appointments. Expenses total \$2.3 million which VIA ends up subsidizing in the amount of approximately \$500,000. We looked at the benefits of VIA, especially the service

provided by VIAtrans, and they outweighed the costs. VIA also provides an alternative to those who do not have a car. No action was taken by Council other than to thank VIA for the complete review of the service and to see if VIA could provide a shuttle service for the 4th of July event. VIA became a sponsor for the event and paid for the cost of shuttle service.

## FOURTH OF JULY REPORT

–This annual event was very successful. Total cost of the event was \$132,000. Revenue from the City and other sponsors totaled \$159,000. Estimated attendance was 20,100, primarily from 78238, 78240 and 78250 zip code areas. We are grateful to the entire staff who helped and that no major incidents occurred, with the ex-

ception of a few lost children, who were returned to their parents.

## IN CLOSING....

There is so much more to report, but I am way over my word limit. Since 2021, I have written a bi-monthly Letter to the Citizens summarizing what went on at the 1st and 3rd council meetings and any other pertinent information. It is posted on the Friday following the council meeting on ENEWS and the City’s website.

Wishing you and your family a happy and safe Thanksgiving. Please call or send me an email if I can help you in any way.

Sincerely, Chris

(210) 618-2092 (cell)

mayorriley@leonvalleytexas.gov

## NEW HOURS

MONDAY	CLOSED
TUESDAY	9AM - 8PM
WEDNESDAY	9AM - 6PM
THURSDAY	9AM - 8PM
FRIDAY	9AM - 6PM
SATURDAY	11AM - 3PM
SUNDAY	CLOSED

Starting October 1, 2023

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Cyber-attacks are on the rise. The type of device you use and the operating system that runs it does not matter to a cybercriminal. They want your data, and they will do what it takes to get it. Let's go over a few things to keep ourselves safe while enjoying the wonders of the connected world.

Think of your digital world and all your devices as your virtual home. You keep an insurance policy on your physical home. Did you know that your homeowner's policy may be able to cover you if your virtual home is attacked or damaged as well. Check with your insurance provider and enquire about cybersecurity insurance.

If you practice the same vigilance with your virtual home as you do your physical

home, you have made the first step in keeping yourself safe. A virtual home security system such as a good antivirus application will help you keep a watchful eye on your virtual home. Do a bit of research and look at reviews, both good and bad, to get an idea if the one you are considering is good. Too much security and your device will slow down significantly. Too little and you might as well leave the front door open.

Keeping up with a home takes a bit of time but keeps it looking great. Keeping up with your virtual house is also a good idea. Make sure to routinely check for and install all the updates and patches for your operating system. Your device manufacturer keeps up with all the latest cyber-threats and does

their best to patch any vulnerabilities that may be there. It is also a good thing to clean your virtual home often. Uninstall apps or games that you don't use anymore. Backup your files to cloud storage or a USB drive and remove them from your machine.

If you needed a new refrigerator in your physical home, how much research would you do before purchasing it? Do the same thing with any applications or services that you install in your virtual home. Check all the reviews you can find for it online. Some of those reviews are written by the very people that created it. Look closely at any of the negative comments and make sure that what they are being negative about, does not change your perception of that app or service.

There are many resources out on the internet that you can use to find more information about keeping your physical and virtual homes protected. The following list contains two sites that came up when searching for cybersecurity resources for homeowners:

- The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has a living repository of cybersecurity services provided

by CISA, widely used open-source tools, and free tools and services offered by private and public sector organizations across the cybersecurity community. <https://www.cisa.gov/resources-tools/resources/free-cybersecurity-services-and-tools>

- The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has a list of free and low cost online cybersecurity learning content on topics such as information technology and cybersecurity. <https://www.nist.gov/itl/applied-cybersecurity/nice/resources/online-learning-content>

What should you do if you are the victim of cybercrime? First, don't panic. Next, change your password on all your devices and services, especially any financial ones. Contact all your financial institutions such as banks and credit cards and alert them to the potential fraud event. Next, contact the Police Department and report an identity theft incident. This will document the crime against your virtual identity. Make sure you document dates, times, websites, bank accounts, or anything else that might have been compromised. You can also report it to the FBI at [tips.fbi.gov](https://tips.fbi.gov), as it is a form of wire fraud.



# NO CODES, NO STANDARDS

## HAS THE CITY OF LEON VALLEY LOWERED OR ABOLISHED ITS BUILDING STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES?

The City recently adopted several codes, including the 2021 International Building Code. This code only applies to the construction standards of a building and not the aesthetics of the exterior of the buildings. The Planning and Zoning Commission is in the process of making recommendations for the removal of the architectural or “aesthetic” standards from the Zoning Code, specifically in Chapter 15 Zoning, Appendix C Overlay Districts. These standards address the “look” of a building in Leon Valley.

### WHY

The reason for the removal is due to the State Legislature changes specified in House Bill 2439, which was adopted during the 2019 legislative session. The bill became effective on September 1, 2019, and is codified in Chapter 3000 of the Texas Government Code.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

This means that sections of the city code regulating building materials are void. For example, Chapter 15 Zoning Code, Section II Standards for sustainability overlay, Part C Exterior Façade material, would not be an enforceable provision.

### WHAT IS THE CITY DOING ABOUT THIS?

Since these provisions are in the Zoning Code, under the Overlay Standards, the Planning and Zoning Commission is currently reviewing these provisions to make recommendations to the City Council.

### HOUSE BILL 2439 GENERALLY STATES THAT CITIES MAY NOT ADOPT OR ENFORCE A RULE, CHARTER PROVISION, ORDINANCE, ORDER, BUILDING CODE, OR OTHER REGULATION THAT:

“(1) prohibits or limits, directly or indirectly, the use or installation of a building product or material in the construction, renovation, maintenance, or other alteration of a residential or commercial building if the building product or material is approved for use by a national model code published within the last three code cycles that applies to the construction, renovation, maintenance, or other alteration of the building; or (2) establishes a standard for a building product, material, or aesthetic method in construction, renovation, maintenance, or other alteration of a residential or commercial building if the standard is more stringent than a standard for the product, material, or aesthetic method under a national model code published within the last three code cycles that applies to the construction, renovation, maintenance, or other alteration of the building. See TEX. GOV'T CODE § 3000.002(a)(1)-(2).”

**ANY CHARTER PROVISION, ORDINANCE, OR OTHER REGULATION ADOPTED BY A CITY THAT CONFLICTS WITH THE PROHIBITIONS IS VOID.**

### IS THE CITY REMOVING THE SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS?

The City Council has not provided which provisions, if any, will be removed. However, the City has received numerous complaints that when referencing the code, standards are not centralized to one particular area, and in some cases, one has to reference several sections of the Code to ensure compliance. What the Planning and Zoning Commission is trying to do is delete the Overlay Standards section and absorb as many of those enforceable provisions in the applicable sections of the rest of the code as possible, so that when someone is referencing the code, they don't have to look in several places. The Planning and Zoning Commission meets every 4th Tuesday of the month where this will be further discussed.

# I HAVE HEARD THAT THE CITY COUNCIL HAS REMOVED ALL STANDARDS FROM THE CODE AND THE CITY'S BEAUTIFICATION IS DETERIORATING, IS THIS TRUE?

**NO, AS PREVIOUSLY STATED, THE CITY COUNCIL HAS UPDATED THE BUILDING CODES BY ADOPTING THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE 2021 EDITIONS, THE 2021 INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE, THE INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE 2021 EDITION, THE INTERNATIONAL EXISTING BUILDING CODE 2021 EDITION, THE 2020 NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE, AND THE INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE 2021 EDITION. LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS WERE LAST AMENDED 2014 AND STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL OVERLAY WERE LAST AMENDED 2010.**

There are also Health and Sanitation Code regulations (Chapter 6 of the Leon Valley Code), which address junk vehicles, high weeds and debris. These codes have not been amended since 2008 and are still in force. If a resident sees any violation, please report them:



**[HTTPS://WWW.LEONVALLEYTEXAS.GOV/COMMUNITY/PAGE/MYLEONVALLEY-REQUEST-FORM](https://www.leonvalleytexas.gov/community/page/myleonvalley-request-form)**



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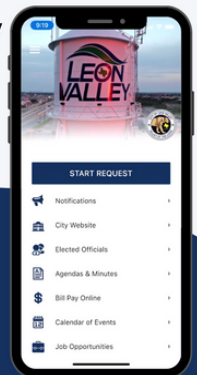
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# Halloween Safety Tips

Remember, safety is a top priority, so follow these tips to ensure a fun and safe Halloween!

## 1. **\*\*Choose Safe Costumes, Avoid Masks that Obscure Vision and Wear Proper Footwear:\*\***

Make sure costumes fit well to prevent tripping. If a costume includes a mask, ensure it doesn't obstruct vision. Choose bright colors or add reflective tape for visibility. Wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes to prevent blisters or accidents while walking.



## 2. **\*\*Use Non-Toxic Makeup:\*\***

If using face paint or makeup, ensure it's non-toxic.



## 3. **\*\*Visibility is Key:\*\***

Carry flashlights or glow sticks to increase visibility, especially after dark.

## 4. **\*\*Stay on Sidewalks and Look Both Ways When Crossing Street:\*\***

Stick to well-lit sidewalks and avoid walking in the street. Cross at designated crosswalks. Always look both ways before crossing the street, even if you have the right of way.



## 5. **\*\*Stay in Groups and Know Your Area:\*\***

Trick-or-treating in groups is safer than going alone. Parents should accompany younger children. Familiarize yourself with the neighborhood and plan a route in advance.

## 6. **\*\*Check Treats and Be Aware of Food Allergens:\*\***

Inspect all treats before consuming them. Discard anything that looks suspicious or is not sealed properly. If you have food allergies, be cautious about consuming unfamiliar treats.

Inspect all treats before consuming them. Discard anything that looks suspicious or is not sealed properly. If you have food allergies, be cautious about consuming unfamiliar treats.

## 7. **\*\*Pet Safety:\*\***

Keep pets indoors on Halloween night to prevent them from getting scared or lost.

## 8. **\*\*Home Safety for Hosts:\*\***

If you're hosting a Halloween event, ensure your property is well-lit and free of tripping hazards.

## 9. **\*\*Fire Safety:\*\***

Be cautious with candles and open flames. Consider using battery-operated candles or LED lights.

## 10. **\*\*Emergency Contact Information:\*\***

Carry a form of ID or write down emergency contact information, especially for children.





# Winter Sewer Averaging



Just a reminder that sewer rate averaging takes place from November to March, so please use the least amount of water as possible during this period (and remind members of your household to do the same!), to keep your sewer rates low for the next year.

## LEON VALLEY OFFERS FREE HOME WATER AUDITS

### *What is Home Water Audit?*

A Home Water Audit is an assessment of how much water is used and how much water can be saved in the home. Conducting a water audit involves helping calculate water use and identifying simple ways for saving water in the home.

### *What are the Benefits of conducting a Home Water Audit?*

Conducting a water audit can help you save money by reducing your water bill, making you aware of how you use your water, and helping you identify ways you can minimize water usage by implementing simple conservation measures without drastically modifying your lifestyle.

### *How do I request a Home Water Audit?*

To request your personal Home Water Audit appointment, please call the Public Works Department at 210-684-1391 ext. 224.

## Winter Prep – Protect the Pipes!

October and November are the best months to prepare your home for the sometimes-freezing South Texas winter. Wrap exposed pipes, insulate pipes that run along exterior walls, cover all outside spigots, and replace any damaged or missing weather strips. Other items to consider for your winter preparations include:

- Have your heating system inspected
- Install a carbon monoxide (CO) detector in your home
- Assure your smoke detectors are in good working order
- Clean out gutters and repair any roof leaks
- Have the chimney cleaned and inspected
- Have a safe alternative heating source at the ready



**Remember, being aware and taking precautions can help make your Holiday shopping experience safer and more enjoyable.**

1. **Plan Ahead:** Make a list of what you need to buy and set a budget to avoid overspending.
2. **Shop During Daylight:** Whenever possible, shop during daylight hours to maximize visibility and safety.
3. **Choose Well-Lit Stores and Park in Well-Traveled Areas:** Opt for stores that are well-lit, both inside and in their parking areas. Park in well-lit, high-traffic areas of the parking lot to reduce the risk of theft or other incidents.



5. **Lock Your Vehicle:** Always lock your car doors and ensure all windows are closed before leaving your vehicle.
6. **Avoid Overloading Yourself:** Don't carry too many bags at once. If you have a lot to carry, consider making multiple trips to your car.



7. **Be Aware of Your Surroundings and Keep Valuables Out of Sight:** Pay attention to who is around you and trust your instincts. If something feels off, be cautious. Don't leave packages, bags, or other valuables visible in your car. Store them in the trunk or cover them up.
8. **Protect Personal Information:** Be mindful of where you store your wallet, purse, or phone. Keep them close and secure to prevent theft.
9. **Use Credit or Debit Cards Securely:** Shield your PIN when entering it, and be cautious of card skimming devices at ATMs.
11. **Avoid Distractions:** Stay off your phone and pay attention to your surroundings, especially in busy or crowded areas.
12. **Beware of Thieves:** Keep your purse or wallet in a secure location and be vigilant in crowded areas.
13. **Be Cautious with Online Shopping:** Use reputable websites and secure payment methods. Be wary of suspicious emails or websites.
14. **Check for Secure Websites:** Look for "https://" in the URL and a padlock symbol in the address bar to ensure a secure connection.



15. **Monitor Your Accounts:** Keep an eye on your bank and credit card statements for any unauthorized or suspicious activity.



## Free Trees!

### 2023 Leon Valley Arbor Day Event

What a better way to welcome the fall weather than by the planting of a newly adopted tree! The City of Leon Valley, in partnership with the Leon Valley Park Commission and CPS Energy, will be providing 2 free trees per resident on **Saturday, October 28, 2023** in front of the Leon Valley Community Center. The event will be held at **6427 Evers Rd.**, between **9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.**, or **until supplies run out**. There will be an assortment of 1-gallon varieties of trees, available while supplies last. Based on current available stock, varieties may include Pecan, Lacey Oak, Texas Redbud, Mexican Buckeye, Anacacho, and Crape Myrtle.

The Tree Adoption is being held on the front patio of the Community Center. Volunteers will take your order form and provide up to two free trees. This event supports the City of Leon Valley's Tree Challenge of planting 10,000 trees by 2025.





Leon Valley City Hall  
6400 El Verde Road  
Leon Valley, TX 78238

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### CITY COUNCIL

- Mayor** Chris Riley  
[mayorriley@leonvalleytexas.gov](mailto:mayorriley@leonvalleytexas.gov)
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### LION'S ROAR

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(210) 684-1391, x 228

### CITY STAFF

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- City Secretary**  
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- Finance Department**  
Carol Goering, Director  
210-684-1391 x 223
- Planning & Zoning Department**  
Mindy Teague, Director  
210-684-1391 x 234
- LV Public Library**  
Regina Reed, Director  
210-684-0720, x 240
- Fire Department**  
Michael Naughton, Fire Chief  
210-684-3219, x 281
- Police Department**  
David Gonzalez, Police Chief  
210-684-3215, x 255
- Public Works**  
Melinda Moritz, Director  
210-681-1232, x 203
- HR Director**  
Lisa Hernandez  
210-681-1391, x 212
- Community Relations Director**  
Crystal Miranda  
210-681-1391, x 228

### CITY MEETINGS

All meetings at City Hall unless otherwise specified. All meetings subject to change due to Covid-19

- City Council**  
1st & 3rd Tuesday - 6:00 p.m.
- Board Of Adjustment**  
Meets as required
- Citizens Police Advisory Committee**  
Quarterly, 3rd Wednesday - 6:00 p.m.
- Coffee with the Mayor**  
Quarterly, 4th Saturday - 9 -11 a.m.
- Earthwise Living Committee**  
2nd Wednesday -  
5:30 p.m. City Hall
- Economic and Community Development Advisory Committee**  
Meets as needed
- Library Board**  
2nd Tuesday - 5:30 p.m. - Library
- Park Commission**  
2nd Thursday - 6:30 p.m. -  
Conference Center
- Planning & Zoning Commission**  
4th Tuesday - 6:30 p.m.

### CITY NUMBERS

Keep these numbers handy

- Emergency Number for POLICE, FIRE and EMS** 911
- City Web Site Address**  
[www.leonvalleytexas.gov](http://www.leonvalleytexas.gov)
- City Hall** 210-684-1391
- Animal Control & Code Compliance** 210-684-6557
- Non-Emergency Fire** 210-684-8897
- Police** 210-684-3215
- Human Resources** 210-684-1391
- Dead Animal Pickup** 210-684-6557
- Public Works** 210-681-1232
- Library** 210-684-0720
- Tiger Sanitation** 210 333-4287
- Community Center Rental** 210-684-1391 ext. 228

City Hall, non-emergency Police and Fire operations may be contacted at the above numbers Monday - Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Closed weekends and holidays.  
Public Works Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

