

THE

FRONT PORCH

News



News and Information from the City of Bulverde and our Neighbors
Issue 3 • March/April 2014

THE FRONT PORCH News

CITY OF BULVERDE

ALL DEPARTMENTS
(COUNCIL, ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC WORKS, POLICE, ETC.)

MAIN NUMBER
830-438-3612

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FAX
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Bill Krawietz , MAYOR	Kirk Harrison , COUNCIL
Rob Hurst , MAYOR PRO TEM	Gene Hartman , COUNCIL
Yvonne Chapman , COUNCIL	Ray Jeffrey , COUNCIL

COMAL COUNTY

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FRONT PORCH NEWS

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Mayor's Point

Singing Hills has broken ground. The 250 acre development located at the northwest corner of Hwy 46 and US 281 has been discussed for, what seems like, forever. Some asked if it would ever become a reality; now that construction has begun, all doubts have been removed.

A project this size, especially being on a very visible corner along with its large commercial component, has the potential to change the look and feel of Bulverde forever.

Nobody on City Council ever wanted our community to lose its look and feel and become a victim of urban sprawl like we see elsewhere. Since approximately 90% of the property lies outside the city limits, our regulatory authority is severely limited. So what could we do?

One of the first things I told the developer was that Bulverde is a special place and our residents expect more. For our citizens to embrace the project, you must

work with us to make it fit in. If you try to force something on the community, it will be a failure.

I believe the developer took those comments to heart. From the beginning they have been willing to listen as we shared our long list of concerns. Everything on our list had a cost associated with it, so how could we get them to make these upgrades and protections? Luckily, state law has a provision for just such situations in Chapter 380 of the Local Government Code called a Development Agreement.

One of the greatest concerns was how storm water runoff from the project would affect those in low lying areas downstream. As a result, the developer has offered to over detain in holding ponds by 40% more than what is normally required by our regulations.

We love our trees and hate to see them removed. So if you look at the clearing that has taken place on the site you may be saddened and think that it will remain that way. That is not the case. The City has negotiated and approved a tree mitigation plan which calls for approximately 460 trees to be replanted throughout the project to replace the trees that needed to be removed. No majestic-category oaks were removed.

(Continued on page 4)



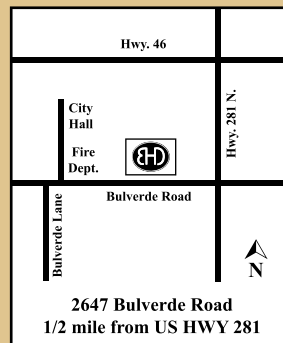
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(Mayor, Continued from page 3)

What could we do about generic appearance of the big box stores, such as Walmart, that will be located just outside our City Limits? The City of Bulverde has adopted some wonderful architectural standards, but they can only be enforced within our corporate city limit boundary, and not in the surrounding unincorporated county area. In the Development Agreement, the developer has consented to apply strict architectural standards to the entire project, both inside and outside of the city limits.

Other city guidelines will be applied as well, including the City's dark sky ordinance, sign ordinance, residential buffer zones, and traffic impact improvements.

The developer will be constructing a central wastewater recycling system that will not only serve their needs, but will be publicly owned and can be enlarged tenfold in the future to serve neighboring developments.

Since wastewater service has been one impediment to quality development in the area, does this mean that we could possibly see an explosion of growth as a result?

To help manage this possible growth, the City needs to have some control as to who connects to the wastewater system. To guarantee this authority, the City needs to own the system. As a result of the Development Agreement, the City will become the owner of the system.

Unfortunately, we have only a narrow strip of City Limits along Hwy 46 and Hwy 281. The original development plans were drawn so that almost all of the retail businesses had their points of sale located just beyond our City boundary. Only the parking lots would have been in the City, which would have left the City shouldering the burden of providing police protection to the properties but not receiving tax revenues to provide that service.

In the unincorporated areas of western Comal County, sales tax rates are already capped at the State maximum, so even if those properties are annexed by the City at a future date, the City will likely never see any sales tax revenue from them.

Even though it will be costly and less desirable to do so for the developer, they have agreed to flip the layout of the smaller commercial and retail pad sites along the frontage road so that the City can receive some sales tax revenue. Without this revenue stream, the financial impact to the City caused by higher service demands would have meant higher property taxes on existing properties.

To compensate for all of these developer concessions, a partial sales tax rebate will be paid back to the developer over many years. Only a percentage of those sales-tax revenues from businesses located within the City Limits section of Singing Hills will be rebated though. No other

revenues or taxes from other sources outside of the project will pay for this project. Since the City originally would have received very little, if any, tax revenue on this project, this is a very good deal for the City of Bulverde and the citizens of our region.

As you can see, the City of Bulverde has been very diligent in finding ways to minimize the negatives of development on our community. We worked with what little we had and made the most of it.

I am confident that the result will be something we can be proud of. It will set a new standard for all future developments to be judged by.

Bill Krawietz
Mayor of Bulverde, TX

On the Cover

Once again, the *Front Porch News* has been given a gift of beautiful photography to grace the front cover. Local photographer Sam Roberts, who also contributed his talents to our inaugural cover, has beautifully photographed a local, historical windmill that is situated just off of Bulverde Road. This windmill is one of the few remaining artifacts from an early Bulverde-area settlement called Herrera, a school community formed in the 1870s on the Guadalupe Herrera survey near Cibolo Creek. The Herrera school was named after a wealthy and influential Tejana, Guadalupe Herrera, a widow and prosperous landowner who was one of the original settlers in the area. Founded in 1888, the Herrera school served the children of the area until 1945, at which time it was consolidated with the Bulverde school district. Following the closure of the Herrera school, the surrounding Herrera community simply faded from existence. This windmill serves as a reminder of Bulverde's rich history and place in the settlement and development of Texas.

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Getting to Know Dranda Dennis

If you call or stop by Bulverde City Hall, chances are you will likely have the pleasure of talking with Dranda Dennis. As one of the two employees who work in the front office of City Hall, Dranda is vital to making a visitor's first impression of the City a good one. The City of Bulverde was fortunate to hire Dranda as an Administrative Assistant in August 2008 when she moved to Texas from Dalton, Georgia to be closer to her daughter, who also lives in the San Antonio area.

Dranda's main duties are in the permitting department, accepting permit applications, plans and fees associated with both residential and commercial building improvements and plats in the City of Bulverde. She reviews the applications for completeness, calculates and accepts permit fees, and ensures the permit gets to the appropriate City personnel for additional review. Dranda also schedules sign, building, and site inspections once the permit has been approved.

As with most City of Bulverde personnel, Dranda serves the citizens of Bulverde in multiple functional roles. Dranda's other duties involve helping with Municipal Court operations, assisting defendants with their questions and letting them know what options they may have. Even though her main duties are with permit activity, Dranda attended classes through the Texas Municipal Court Clerks Association to achieve certification as a Municipal Court Clerk Level 1 and better assist the City with its Court operations.

Dranda's friendly personality, pleasant and compassionate attitude, and willingness to help others make her a great asset as an employee and an ambassador for the City of Bulverde.



Free Community Events

Free tax preparation and e-filing at the B/SB Library is going on now through April 14th. Service is provided by AARP Tax-Aide; by appointment only. Contact (830) 885-2247.

Bulverde United Methodist Church will host a free travel seminar for anyone interested in a planned trip to New England. The seminar will be on March 27th at 6:30 at the church. Visit www.bulverdeumc.org for more information.

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Where the Wild Things Are



One of the things that make Bulverde an attractive place to live is the rural atmosphere. Because of that rural atmosphere, there are often numerous interactions between residents and wild animals. Wildlife common to our region include skunks, raccoons, turkeys, deer, fox, coyotes, and even mountain lions.

The main thing to keep in mind is that these animals are wild. Some may look cute and cuddly, but they can suddenly become aggressive or protective, causing significant injury to people or domestic pets. The best course of action is to keep your distance from them (and keep your pets away also). Feeding one type of wild animal (deer, for example) often attracts other wild animals. Not only does the food you leave out attract other wild animals, but it also attracts those animals' natural predators. These predators (coyotes, foxes, and mountain lions) do not distinguish between wild animals and domestic pets as potential prey. Keep an eye out for your pets to help protect them from these predators.

Domestic pet food also attracts wild animals. It is best not to leave dog/cat food outside. During drought conditions, all wild animals become stressed to some degree, which can cause animals to seek food in areas in which they wouldn't normally forage or hunt. If your pet's food is left outside, it is an inadvertent invitation for hungry wild animals to visit the food containers. If you feed your pets outside, it is especially important to be vigilant for their safety.

How does the City of Bulverde deal with wild animals? The City is limited in what they can do because wild animals are regulated by the State. However, the City suggests contacting a private pest control company if a resident is having an issue with raccoons, skunks, foxes, etc. These private companies have the proper licenses, training, and equipment to deal with these types of wild animals, whereas the City does not.

Issues with larger and/or more aggressive animals, such as coyotes, deer, mountain lions, etc., should be referred to the Texas Parks and Wildlife office in San Antonio (210)348-7375. If you see a mountain lion, please inform the Texas Parks and Wildlife San Antonio office. They do keep track of and investigate all sighting reports.

What about an injured deer or other wild animal? Please report it to (830)620-3408 (nonemergency dispatch). Law enforcement officers are authorized to deal with injured animals. However, their options for dealing with such animals are very limited and, in most cases, requires the animal to be humanely dispatched. Wild animals on private property are the responsibility of the property owner, even after law enforcement action. Wild animals in the public right-of-way or on public property will be dealt with by the appropriate public agency.

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Bulverde/Spring Branch Area Chamber of Commerce



A Word from the Chamber

- by Rhonda Zunker, President

Spring is coming and the Bulverde/Spring Branch Area Chamber has an exciting year ahead. The Board of Directors approved the 2014 Program of Work that will strive to bring better communication, more benefits and programs to the membership, and start establishing a basis for long term viability of the Chamber of Commerce.

We are currently redesigning our website—www.bulverdespringbranchchamber.com. One of the new features we are working with MonsterWeb.net on is to develop a responsive website that you can view on your computer, tablet, or mobile device. The new website will also include a Community Calendar,

Blog/News Release section where we can post articles about trending topics, and a more robust Education/Resource Center and easier access to our Shop Local Program. We want to become your gateway for information. We hope to roll out the new website by mid-April.

In early April, we will be distributing 7,000+ Bulverde/Spring Branch Community Guides to our area. In addition to providing the Business Directory of our Chamber Members, we hope to highlight all of the reasons why someone would want to visit or live in the Bulverde/Spring Branch Area. We hope to feature articles on Recreation, Community Gems such as the EMS Program, Library, Parks, Schools, and Community Service. This will be a magazine style and size publication.

Our Mission at the Chamber is to “advocate for and promote the success of our members and responsible growth for our business community.” Keep up with the Chamber and its members by “Liking” our Facebook page or send us an email to bsbacoc@gvtc.com, or give us a call at 830-438-4285 to be added to our Chamber News and/or Member Events Communications.



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B/SB Area Chamber of Commerce Events Calendar

MARCH 19

Chamber Monthly Power Lunch*
12 Noon-1:00 pm

MARCH 27

Business Networking Mixer**
5:30-7:30 pm
Sponsored by Max's Roadhouse

APRIL 7

Chamber Golf Tournament
River Crossing Golf Club
Shotgun Start at 1:00pm
Contact the Chamber for more information.

APRIL 16

Chamber Monthly Power Lunch*
12 Noon-1:00 pm

APRIL 24

Business Networking Mixer**
5:30-7:30 pm
Sponsored by The Lodge at Bridal Veil Falls

**Power Lunches:* See Chamber website
www.bulverdespringbranchchamber.com
or call the Chamber office (830-438-4285) to register.

***Networking mixers are Members Only events*





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Kelly Erwin-Keller Williams Hill Country
Kimberly Shoemaker-Keller Williams
Martin, Barry
Monster Web
Nihill Insurance Services LLC
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Singing Hills-DJL Development LLC
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You Could Be Here



911 Where is Your Emergency?

Our community Fire and EMS need YOUR help. In an emergency, the two most important questions asked are 1.) **where** is your emergency, and 2.) **what** is your emergency? These two pieces of information are vital to getting the RIGHT emergency services to the **RIGHT** location in a **REASONABLE** amount of time. In 90% of our priority one calls (heart attack, stroke, house fire, etc.) our goal is to be by your side within ten minutes of the call for help. But once the address is obtained from the dispatcher, actually locating the address at times can present a challenge.

Your chances of surviving a cardiac arrest are reduced by 7% to 10% each minute you have to wait for EMS to arrive (source: The American Heart Association). According to the National Safety Council, over 100,000 people die each year because help did not arrive on time. Homeowners, or their alarm companies, often call fire departments at the first whiff of smoke, or the smell of something burning. So in most cases, the fire has not flamed outside the structure (making it visible) where firefighters can immediately find your address.

Locating an address in Bulverde or Spring Branch can often be challenging and sometimes impossible, even in the daytime, but it is especially stressful at night. Our emergency responders recognize when a life or a home is at risk, and that seconds often make all the difference. So imagine the

stress that is felt as they drive up and down a pitch black street trying to find the right number on a rock, or on an unlit mailbox, or a metal pig, or numbers on a house which is 80 feet off the road. GPS equipment helps the rescue personnel to get within close proximity, but rely upon address numbers to verify that they are at the right house.

There is a solution. The fire department makes double-sided REFLECTIVE signs, which show up like a beacon in the night, saving valuable time. There is a \$25 fee for the sign, which includes delivery, and installation on a small metal pole at your home. By partnering with the emergency responders, you play a vital role in getting the right emergency services to your side when you need us the most.

Please call Jo Zuercher at 830-228-4220 or visit her at the Central Fire/EMS Station located at 353 Rodeo Drive to order your sign today.



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Not All Allergies Are Created Equal

In the summer of 2010, we lost a 22-year-old firefighter/medic named Brennan Livaudais. Brennan completed his on-site ambulance training at Bulverde-Spring Branch EMS and was a fine young man. Brennan died after being stung on the stomach and lip by wasps. A scholarship has been set up by Brennan's family to help finance the careers of other firefighters or medics.

If you live here long enough, most people here in Comal County are used to some kind of allergy—cedar, wild grasses, dust, or mold. We all seem to have a runny nose, itchy eyes, and bouts of sneezing at some time during the year. We also share our community with a good number of biting and stinging critters—bees, mosquitos and wasps—who can leave a red, itchy mark on our skin after an encounter. These stings are usually a discomfort, but in small quantity; to most, they are just a nuisance. However, there is an allergic condition known as anaphylaxis that has rapid onset and can be deadly. Tragically, even the first episode of anaphylaxis can be fatal.

The severity of anaphylactic reactions can be minimized by early recognition of the symptoms and seeking emergency medical care promptly. Persons who have been previously treated may even have a rescue medication, an epinephrine autoinjector, to provide a potentially lifesaving dose of epinephrine. If any of your friends or family members have an epinephrine autoinjector, you should become familiar with the device so you can assist them should they have a severe allergic reaction.

If you are interested in helping young heroes finance their firefighter or medic career through the Brennan Livaudais Scholarship, please contact Judy Millsbaugh at 830-228-4206 or judy.millsbaugh@bsbems.org. Every dollar helps save a life or a home.

When Should you Use an Epinephrine Autoinjector?

When Should you Use an Epinephrine Autoinjector? Epinephrine is the best treatment for anaphylaxis and is prescribed by a doctor. It works best if it is given within the first few minutes of a severe allergic reaction.

A person who is having an allergic reaction should use their epinephrine autoinjector immediately if they:

- Are having trouble breathing
- Feel tightness in the throat
- Feel lightheaded or think they might pass out

If you are treating a child with an allergic reaction, also use the autoinjector if the child:

- Is not responding, seems groggy, or passes out during an allergic reaction.
- Has food allergies or is vomiting repeatedly shortly after eating, especially if these symptoms are accompanied by flushing or hives.
- Is coughing repeatedly during an allergic reaction.
- Had a previous anaphylaxis and develops widespread hives after possibly eating a trigger food.
- Has definitely eaten a trigger food that previously caused very severe anaphylaxis.

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PUBLIC SERVICE CAREER PATH FOR TEENS

Right here in Bulverde and Spring Branch, teenagers ages 14–18 can explore potential careers in public service. By explore, we mean they ride on board ambulances or fire apparatus to 911 calls and help local police in their duties. The organization is called **J-Crew**, and they meet every Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m. at the Fire and EMS Central station at 353 Rodeo Drive in Spring Branch. Uniforms and equipment are provided through sponsorships from companies like Service King and DJL Ventures, the developer of Singing Hills.

J-Crew is also known as Explorer Post 1700, and as such, J-Crew members learn leadership, develop physical and mental fitness, and develop the tools to transition with a running start into careers or higher



education. Not only do members learn valuable skills, they also serve their communities in meaningful and lifesaving ways, in a safe environment. Law enforcement is a new career path recently introduced to J-Crew. Participants will learn about investigating an accident, white collar crime, the use of technology in investigations, crime scene investigation, and more.

EMS Captain Andy Fox is the overall J-Crew/Explorer Troop commander. Dustin Beaudoin, the fire chief for both Bulverde and Spring Branch departments, leads the fire training. Chief Gary Haecker and the City of Bulverde Police Department guide the law enforcement education of the J-Crew program.

J-Crew is an eye-opening learning experience that provides members with a first-hand look at the daily and often heroic life of an EMT, a firefighter, and a police officer. We invite you to attend the next Tuesday night meeting or for more information.

E-mail Capt. Andy Fox at andy.fox@bsbems.org.

Collin Montgomery, the first J-Crew member to become a full-time paid staff at EMS. Travis Haecker (not pictured) is a J-Crew member, and also a Nationally Registered EMT. Both Collin and Travis graduated from the EMT program at the Centre for Emergency Health Sciences.

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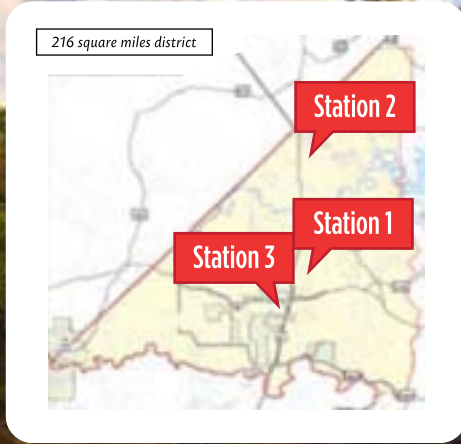
Expect some exciting news in the May/June issue about your Emergency Services.

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- 3 Tankers
- 4 Brush Trucks
- 2 Polaris ATV
- 1 Command Vehicle
- 1 Rescue Boat
- 1 Support Vehicle
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Average Response Time - 7.5 minutes
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 Average Time on Task EMS - 75 minutes

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Up-and-Coming Bulverde Developments—Singing Hills and Johnson Ranch

The Singing Hills development, a 250 acre mixed-use, master planned development located at the northwest corner of US Hwy 281 and State Hwy 46 is now underway. Plans for this development include an 180,000 square foot Wal-Mart Super Center, scheduled to open for business late 2015; 30± commercial pad sites for retail, restaurants, and other services; 40,000 square feet of office space; a hotel site; 300± single-family home sites; and 160± multifamily housing units, with the first housing units due for availability by early 2016. This project is predominantly located in unincorporated Comal County and partially located within the City of Bulverde. The developer, SH-DJL Development, contracted an award-winning team of professionals, such as REOC Development, MDN Architects, Middleman Construction, J.R.A. Landscape Architects, Moy Tarin Ramirez Engineers, and M&S Engineering, to assist in developing this high quality project.

Johnson Ranch, a 767 acre mixed-use, master planned development located predominantly outside of the Bulverde city limits in the unincorporated part of Comal County is also under construction along US Hwy 281 and FM 1863. This development will include approximately 950 residential homes by award winning builders Lennar, Highland, Ryland, Monticello, and Sitterle; 96.2 acres of mixed-use property; a 2 acre emergency services site; a 6 acre amenity center; and 3.7 acres of neighborhood parks and trails. In addition, a 16.1 acre school site was dedicated and is now home to Johnson Ranch Elementary. The developer, DHI Investment Company, also developed Cordillera Ranch located off Hwy. 46 near Boerne.

These developments were made possible by cooperation among the developers and their consultants, the City of Bulverde, Comal County, the Bulverde/Spring Branch Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Bulverde/Spring Branch Economic Development Foundation (BSBEDF). These projects help meet several of the goals and objectives of the Bulverde/Spring Branch Area Economic Development Plan, such as providing much needed infrastructure improvements to the area.



Sherry Mosier,
Executive Director

The BSBEDF looks forward to assisting our community in its efforts to manage growth and retain our existing businesses while preserving our rural character and quality of life. For more information about the BSBEDF and our goals and objectives, visit our website at www.bsbedf.com or call us at 830.885.4331.



Bulverde/Spring Branch Library begins “Reading Room” Expansion

In mid-February, you may have started to see construction equipment on the far side of the library by the Butterfly Garden. The Bulverde Area Rural Library District, the governing board of the library, has contracted with Bandy Construction to expand the library by adding an approximately 800 square foot “Reading Room.” “One of the biggest complaints we have from patrons is the noise level in the library,” states Library Director Susan Herr. “Unfortunately, the high ceilings, while aesthetically pleasing, carry the noise throughout the library. The new room won’t have doors but we plan for it to be much quieter than anywhere else in the library.” The new room should be complete no later than mid-May, before the Summer Reading program begins at the library.



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Eagle Scout Projects Enhance Library Grounds

Over the last year, three Eagle Scouts have offered their services to help enhance the Library grounds. David Sifuentes built several "Leopold" benches that have been placed around the library grounds. "We initially saw benches like these at Lake Mitchell in San Antonio," says Susan Herr, Library Director. "When David approached us regarding his Eagle Scout project, we proposed this as a plan. He far exceeded our expectations with the beautiful and comfortable benches he built!"

Phillip Winston created a covered kiosk by the Library's rainwater catchment tank that the library will use to portray how rainwater catchment systems work for his Eagle Scout project. "His work is excellent, very professional," stated Don Clark, Bulverde Area Rural Library District Board President.

A current Eagle Scout project is underway by Bryant Wageman to build a pump house to protect the pipes of the watering system. "We did have pipes break one year," states Rich Bradley, Vice President, Bulverde Area Rural Library District. "This will really help so we don't have to replace pipes again." Bryant surveyed the needs of the library before approaching the Director. As Susan Herr proposed the project, Bryant already had a proposal with specs and drawings ready. Great minds think alike!

The Library Board and Director continue to be amazed at the well thought out and professional projects these Scouts provide. The Eagle Scout program is training these young men on every aspect of planning and implementing a project and teaching them leadership skills and our community is much better for it!



Eagle Scout
Winston

Eagle Scout
Sifuentes with
Library Director
Susan Herr



More Library Attractions

2014 Book & Author Luncheon

Please join the Bulverde/Spring Branch Friends of the Library for the 9th annual Book & Author Luncheon. This event takes place on Wednesday, March 5, 2014 from 11:00am to 2:00pm at the Boulder Springs Event Center located at 1726 Herbelin Rd in New Braunfels. Lunch will be served at noon. Book sales and signings are from 11:00am to 11:55am and again after the authors' presentations until 2:30pm. The slate of five authors includes celebrated authors and new authors and books that cross several genres. A live auction will be held for some special items. This fundraiser is hosted by the Friends of the Bulverde/Spring Branch Library and proceeds from ticket sales, book sales, auction items, and raffle items will benefit the Bulverde/Spring Branch Library and will be used for library projects.

Hiking & Walking on the Trail with Your Pet

Don't take your best friend out unprepared. Learn how to have fun with your pet while keeping them safe from injury while walking along a trail or going for a hike. This class covers the top 6 pet first aid situations encountered while out on the trail. This class will be held on Saturday, March 22 at 2:00 pm and is presented by Kathy Rodriguez, Pet Tech Instructor #1820 and owner of Royally Spoiled Pet Services. For more information, email at rspetservices

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The Bulverde Garden

The Bulverde Community Park Association and Community Garden Committee, in conjunction with the City of Bulverde, are forming our first local community garden.

The group's vision is to provide opportunities for people to grow their own food, increase their healthy activity, get to know their neighbors, learn from each other, increase well-being, donate crops to Provisions (formerly the Bulverde Food Pantry) and the Bulverde Activity Center for distribution to those in need, grow native drought-resistant plants, and create a productive and beautiful community. Our Bulverde Community Garden will provide fenced, secure, garden plots to area residents as well as nonprofit groups in and around the greater Bulverde area.

The Bulverde Community Garden mission is to provide gardening and greening opportunities for the physical and social benefit of the people of western Comal County. The garden will be located on a parcel of vacant city-owned property between City Hall and the Bulverde-Spring Branch Activity Center. The garden will develop and expand from immediate access from the south through the Activity Center's parking lot. Funds have been allocated by the City of Bulverde to secure the lot with gates and appropriate deer-proof fencing, in addition to bringing water to the site.

A community garden is not just a place to grow plants that provide fresh, healthy, low-cost food that can substitute for otherwise expensive food purchases. It's a way to bring value to our area by promoting community, environmental and food sustainability, providing an alternative source of food, as well as providing cheaper and fresher produce.

The American Community Garden Association (ACGA) has a broad definition of what a community garden entails. It can be urban, suburban, or rural. It can grow flowers, vegetables, or community. It can be one community plot, or can be many individual plots. It can be at a school, hospital, or in a neighborhood. It can also be a series of plots dedicated to "urban agriculture" where the produce is grown for a market.

Benefits of community gardens extend far beyond the basic food elements for producing nutritious foods. Community gardens also enhance an area's cultural evolution by:

- Building a sense of community among area residents
- Providing opportunity for learning and teaching new skills, such as how to sow seeds, how and when to harvest, and to better understand our food system
- Creating a social gathering place for the community and encourage the sharing of intergenerational knowledge
- Reducing family food budgets
- Encouraging self-reliance and improving quality of life for participants
- Creating opportunity for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education for all age groups
- Helping improve the local environment by preserving and growing green space and by encouraging people to act as local stewards
- Providing opportunities for cross-cultural connections

The Garden is scheduled to open in April. If you, your business, or nonprofit organization are interested in having a plot or getting involved in this exciting new community program through volunteering or providing financial and/or in-kind support, please contact the Bulverde Community Garden Chair, Joanne Hall at jothall@gvvc.com.



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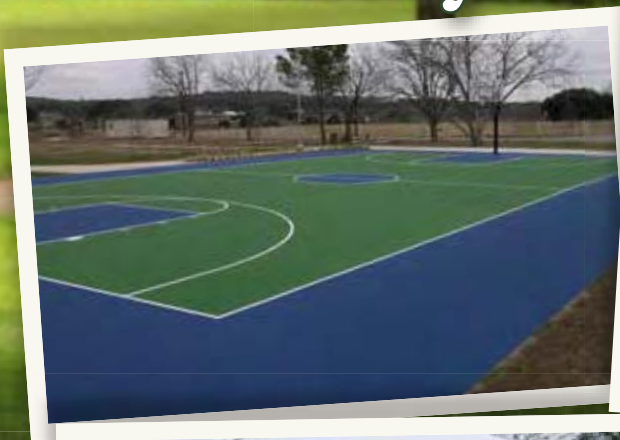
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City Park Preview



Basketball Court

If basketball is your game you're going to enjoy playing on the full size court at the Bulverde Community Park. The court features a non-slip sport coating and regulation markings and goals. All you need to bring is a ball. The court is conveniently located in the center of the park and connected to other facilities with concrete sidewalks.

Covered Picnic Area

It wouldn't be a park without picnic areas and you'll find lots of great spots here. Some are under roofs and some are under trees. Whichever you choose, you're going to enjoy picnics a lot more in the newly remodeled Bulverde Community Park. Grills are conveniently located throughout the park near the picnic tables.

Large Gazebo

One of the central features of the park is a large Gazebo. This multi-use covered structure promises to bring excitement and adventure to park visitors when used for large gatherings or for educational and entertainment events. The gazebo is located between the playground areas and the sports fields.

Playgrounds and Swings

Numerous playground areas dot the park featuring sturdy child-safe equipment. The playgrounds feature swings, slides and lots more, all within safe mulch filled play areas. Sidewalks connect the many playgrounds and the splash pad making it easy for parents to walk around in the park and still keep an eye on their children.

Restrooms

The natural stone building near the center of the park houses the restrooms and water fountains. Visitors can now plan a full day of playing and picnicking in the newly remodeled park.



THE SPRING KITTEN CROP IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER!

- by Carrye Franzel,
Bulverde Area Humane Society

The single most important thing you can do as an owner of a cat or dog is to spay or neuter your pet. Are you feeding outdoor/community cats and feeling outnumbered? Be a part of the solution. Learn and participate in Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR).

Spring is "kitten season," when the number of calls about unwanted kitten litters goes up at the Bulverde Area Humane Society (BAHS). Our cat and kitten shelter population typically doubles then, increased by the birth explosion of outdoor/community cats.

BAHS takes a proactive approach to the crisis of dog and cat overpopulation. Many pets surrendered to our facility come in still intact, some with their unwanted litters. We spay/neuter every animal that comes into our care. We educate the public. Even when we have no space to take in any more cats, callers asking for help with unwanted litters are offered options including low or no-cost spay/neuter resources, and are encouraged to take that step.

BAHS is a proud partner with Animal Rescue Connections and San Antonio Feral Cat Coalition in Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), a community program that reduces the breeding of community cats. With TNR, cats are humanely trapped, taken to a vet for sterilization, and after a brief recovery period are returned to the area where originally captured. Data supports this as an effective approach to reducing the number of strays. If you are feeding stray cats, you can help in this important work. Free informational workshops are offered every 4th Sunday of the month, at the Bulverde Spring Branch EMS Building. For more information visit www.animalrescueconnections.org

As a no-kill shelter, BAHS is committed to sharing information about responsible pet ownership and animal care. With spring in the air, isn't it time to do your part?



Photo © Michelle Gissell



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Lions to Host Annual Bulverde Car Show

The Spring Branch-Bulverde Family Lions Club will hold their annual Bulverde Car Show on March 29th at the Bulverde Baptist Church on Bulverde Rd. The Lions host the show to raise funds to help Bulverde-area organizations such as Provisions (formerly the Bulverde Food Pantry), St. Jude's Ranch for Children, and the Texas Lions Camp (TLC) in Kerrville. Each year the Family Lions pay for local youngsters suffering severe burns, physical disabilities, type 1 diabetes, cancer, or Downs to spend a fun-filled camping week at TLC. The SBB Lions also conduct free Spot Vision eye inspections for area youngsters and they provide eye exams and glasses to the areas youngsters and seniors.

Among the cars on display at the Bulverde Car Show this year will be San Antonio's own Wes Beldele and his award-winning dragster. Show cars—classic and hot rod—will be divided into 40 classes and distinctive custom trophies will be awarded for Best of Show as well as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places in each class. Registration is from 8:00 to 10:00 AM with judging being completed by noon. Show awards will be announced at 2:00 PM.

The public is invited to view the cars, converse with the car owners, and enjoy a day viewing these beautifully restored automobiles. Free parking, free admission, the Blue Lion Train, and the annual Family Lions Invitational Pinewood Race highlight a day of family fun. Food and drink vendors will be available all day.

To register a car for the show (\$25) or for further information about the Lions' Bulverde Car Show, visit www.BulverdeCarShow.com, email DCHamilton@sbcglobal.net, or call Lion Dan Hamilton at 830.438.7046.



Pinewood Racing Time!

With help from St. Jude's Ranch staff and Spring Branch-Bulverde Lions, youngsters carefully build their race cars in preparation for the upcoming annual Family Lions Invitational Pinewood Races. The St. Jude's racing enthusiasts will compete in one of 12 racing classes that include four Cub Scout classes, four non-scout classes that are open to all girls and boys, open adult classes, and a vintage class for cars built more than five years ago.

Cub Scouts—old and young—in and around the greater Bulverde area are invited to race their pinewood cars; there is no entry fee; all scout troops are welcome. Trophies or ribbons will be awarded for first through sixth place in each class. Awards will also be made for Best in Show, Mayor's Choice, and several other categories.

The Pinewood Invitational Races are sponsored each year on the last Saturday in March by the Spring Branch-Bulverde Family Lions Club in conjunction with the Club's annual Bulverde Car Show. Both events are hosted by the Bulverde Baptist Church and Cub Scout Pack #548.

Community youngsters wishing to build their own cars to race in the open categories may do so free of charge at the Home Depot sponsored Car Build that will be held on site from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Races for these open car classes are scheduled to begin at 1:00 PM.

Weigh in and classification of cars begins with the scouts at 8:00 AM; races begin at the Church gymnasium at 9:00 AM. The public is invited to both the car show and the pinewood races—there is no admission charge. Food and drinks by various vendors will be available for purchase.

For further information, complete rules, and race times visit www.BulverdeCarShow.com or call Lion Larry Sunn at 210.286.8050.



BULVERDE SPRING BRANCH ACTIVITY CENTER

SERVING ADULTS 50+

The Activity Center Expansion is Complete!

The Bulverde Spring Branch Activity Center is proud to announce the completion of our new facility. We have volunteers assisting in all our programs from Fitness Classes, Social Activities, Fellowship Meals, and our Meals on Wheels program.

Our members enjoy seeing all their friends here and participating in a variety of programs every week. Stay tuned for stories featuring our members and our upcoming events. Please visit our website www.bsbc.com and Facebook page also.



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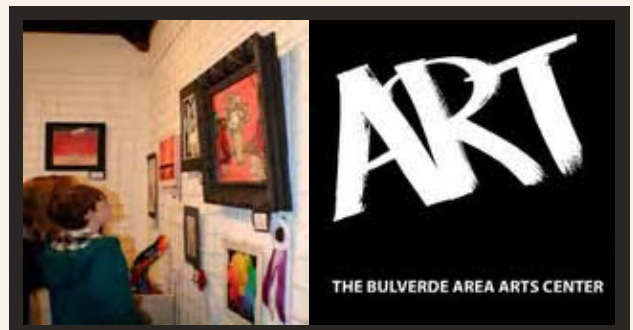
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Art Show to Feature Area High School Artists

An overflow crowd spilled out onto the front porch of the Bulverde Area Arts Center Gallery at the 2013 High School Art Show. The exhibit featured more than fifty works of art by Smithson Valley High School student artists that were selected by a jury to appear in the show.

The 2014 High School Art Show is scheduled to run from April 25 through May 31. The public is invited to the opening reception on Friday, April 25 from 6 pm to 8 pm. The gallery is located at 2355 Bulverde Road, #9. There is no admission charge to visit the gallery.



Commissioner's Corner

Hello from Scott Haag, your Precinct #2 County Commissioner. I hope each of you has had a fantastic start to 2014. I would like to address an item that may be helpful to you during times of heavy rain in your area.

Comal County has thirteen low water crossing monitors, with seven of them located in the western part of Comal County. They monitor certain low water crossings in real time and can be viewed from any computer. This can be a very helpful tool to help you determine if the roadway is passable during rainfall. You can access this information by following the steps below:

1. Go to the Comal County website at www.co.comal.tx.us
2. Look for then click on County Departments
3. Click on Engineer and Road Dept.
4. When you reach this page you will see a section toward the bottom of the page called "Current Weather Info" under that you will see "Low Water Crossing Monitors."
5. Click on Low water crossing monitors and a map will come up with dots showing the locations of the low water crossing monitors.

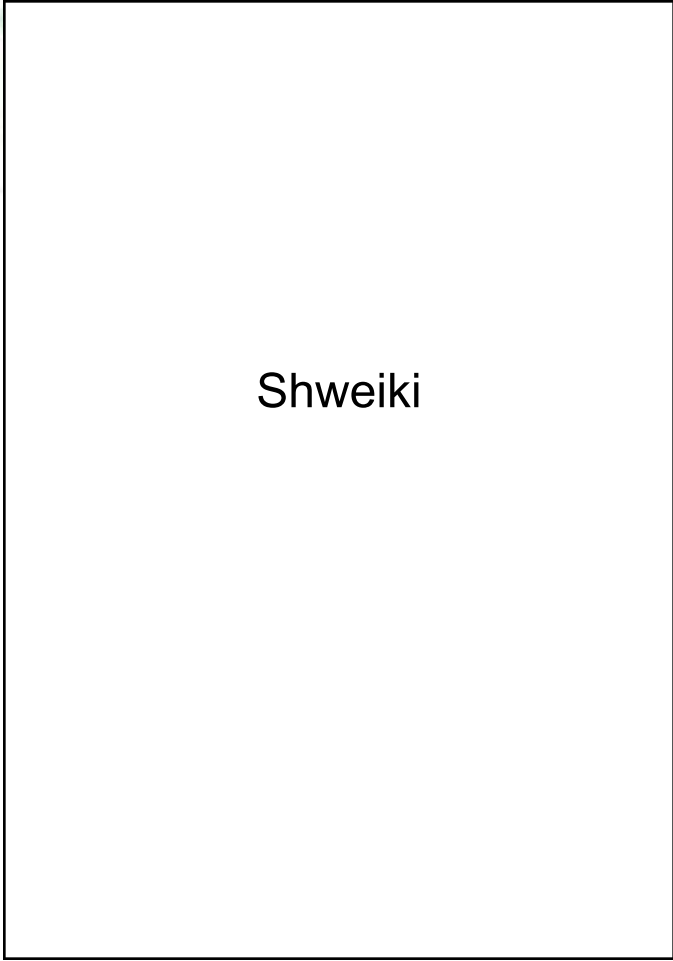
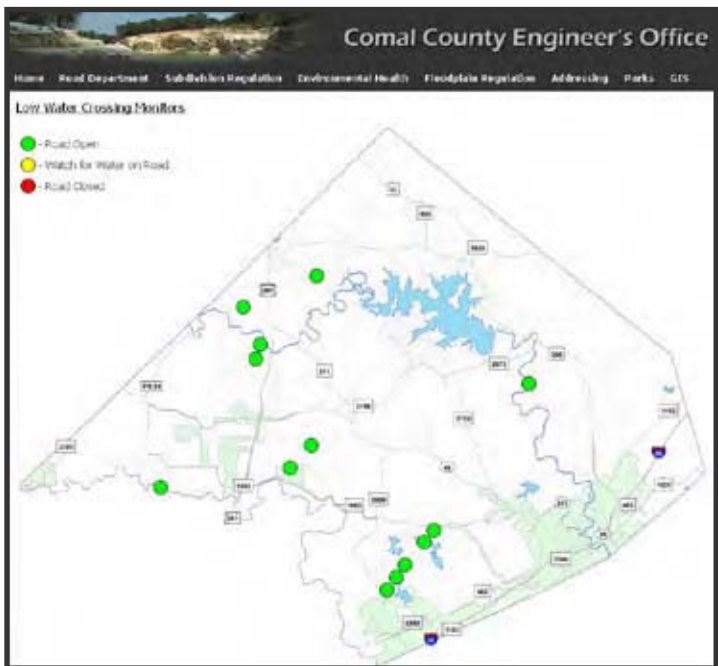
6. You can then click on the dot of your choice and it will show a picture of the area and a more precise map of the crossing area along with the depth of water that is currently flowing over the roadway and how much rain this area has received in the past hours.

Remember these monitors are just a guide to assist you in knowing what is happening. Water can rise quickly and the crossing may have more water over the road than the last time you checked.

We are currently working on an interlocal agreement with Bexar County to add three more locations for low water crossing monitors. They will be at Lower Smithson Valley Road at Cibolo Creek, Obst Road at Cibolo Creek, and Bulverde Lane at Cibolo Creek. Please watch for these to come online in two to three months.

Always be safe and do not drive thru high water.
"Turn around, do not drown."

Scott Haag
Comal County Commissioner Pct #2



Shweiki

OWL Shacks

“It was like a National Geographic moment...right out my window!”

by Shari San Roman
Photo courtesy of Bill Schmoker

Screech owls roost and nest in tree hollows or cavities. Owls cannot excavate a hole like a woodpecker can. They rely on finding a natural hollow or an abandoned woodpecker cavity. An Owl Shack resembles a tree cavity. Mounting an owl shack in a tree on your property will provide an appropriate nesting environment for local owls, as well as provide an excellent owl watching experience for you and your family.

There are over 20 species of owls. Screech owls are some of the smaller members, ranging 8–12” tall and very husky. They eat large insects and rodents, so they are quite beneficial to humans. They do not catch or kill anything larger than they can handle and are not interested in interacting with humans or pets. Since owls are wild animals, do not feed them. They will forage and hunt on their own. Placement of your owl shack is important. Face the box in any direction except north, selecting an open side of a tree to allow for free flying in/out and through branches. The rooftop needs to be at least 15 feet above the ground. Before installing your owl shack in the tree, put two large handfuls of dry leaf litter from the ground inside. Do not include any green vegetation, sawdust, woodchips, or anything freshly cut as it will create moisture which will accelerate wood rot or breed mites. Raise the owl shack to desired location. Use a rope or strap to initially secure the owl shack to the tree, thus allowing you to have two free hands for mounting it with hardware. Using an ‘L’ bracket on the top and bottom of the shack, attaching them with long wood screws directly into the bark is recommended.



Fun Owl Facts:

- Owls typically use these owl shacks as a roost during cooler weather or when breeding. Occupancy might be immediate or it may take much longer. With luck, yours could become occupied soon. If so, you'll enjoy watching your owl snooze or stretch in the entrance hole. Typical backyard activities and loud noises likely will not keep an owl from roosting in your shack. We rake leaves, kids run and play, dogs are back and forth; all while the owls watch from above.
- Screech owls are already in our area. They live in harmony with the other birds. Screech owls do not forage during daylight hours. This is also when your other bird feeders are the most active. By night, that same bird feeder is active with rodents and bugs, which are some of the very things Screech owls devour.
- In Central Texas, egg laying typically occurs around mid-to-late March. As with the spring “leafing out” period for the trees, the timing of egg laying may change due to differences in weather cycles. After about 30 days of incubation, the eggs hatch. These nestlings spend the next 28 days in the nest before fledging in Mid-May or later. Nestlings are 20–22 days old when first observed in the owl shack’s entrance. Before that, they are too young and weak to make the climb. Once they fledge, they do not return to the nest.
- Gender is very difficult to define in owls. The female is 10–15% larger than her mate. Many factors change an owl’s size appearance—puffing up when chilled or the opposite when warm, stretching tall and/or erecting the ear tufts all make it hard to accurately identify an owl’s size, thus making it hard to determine if male or female. So if you’re trying to decide on a worthy name for your owl, it might be best to consider giving it a unisex name!

