



ARANSAS PASS CITY NEWS

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NEW WATERTOWER WORK BEGINS

Although the behind-the-scenes work has been going on for weeks, actual onsite watertower construction began the week of January 21st. See pic above. The City's old watertower was destroyed by Hurricane Harvey. The new tower will be a more modern single-leg design. Completion date will be in August of this year. FEMA is paying for the tower and the Rebuild Texas Fund will cover the City's required match.

CITY ELECTION—MAY 4TH

Aransas Pass voters will go to the polls May 4, 2019 to elect a Mayor and Council Members for Places 1 and 3. The filing period began on January 16th and will end on February 15th. If you are not registered to vote, you must do so by April 4th in order to vote in this election. Early voting will be conducted from April 22 through April 30, 2019. Candidate packets can be obtained in the City Secretary's Office.



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NEW CITY WEBPAGE NOW IS LIVE

To the left is a screen shot of one of the several full-page rotating pictures people see when they access the new city webpage. It went live January 22nd. The new webpage creates an attractive and favorable image of the city emphasizing its water environment. Also, it is more user friendly. A committee, which included a citizen, designed the webpage. The address is: <aransaspasstx.gov>

Welcome to Aransas Pass



SIDEWALK UP—BILLBOARD DOWN

That unsightly billboard frame (see picture above) that had been a fixture for many years in Harbor Point Park at Conn Brown Harbor is now down. Additionally, a new sidewalk that extends from the current sidewalk to the fish cleaning station is under construction. The billboard frame, which has not served any purpose for years, was removed during the month of January. This work is part of City Plans to improve Harbor Point Park. Funds for this project are in the Harbor Master's budget. Separate private grant funds will be made available to the City for other work at this location, including the restroom; an additional sidewalk and the fish cleaning station. All of these improvements do not include the upcoming FEMA repairs to the lights and poles caused by damage from Hurricane Harvey. Lighting repairs also will be made to the nearby Seaman's Memorial Tower. Additionally, the Mayor and City Council recently directed city staff to request qualifications for an engineer to design the extensive road rebuild at Conn Brown Harbor. A \$5 mil EDA grant will pay for this project.

CITY EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR HONORED

City Finance Director Sandra Garcia is named employee of the year. The recognition was given January 25th during the annual Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet. City Manager Gary Edwards said it was difficult trying to select a recipient when so many city employees are qualified. Sandra has been a leader in working with FEMA on recovery projects. It is important for the Finance Director and her staff to stay current with Federal Government requirements so we are in compliance with upcoming audits. Without her oversight the City might be responsible for thousands if not millions of dollars. Sandra also was instrumental in helping to maintain a strong S&P credit rating following Hurricane Harvey. Sandra was a major factor with the establishment of a new city budget process. Each year the City Manager selects one City Worker to be employee of the year. Pictured below are Sandra Garcia and City Manager Gary Edwards.



2019 Aransas Pass 82nd Awards Dinner

CLEAN-UP DAY A HUGE SUCCESS (MORE ARE COMING)

On Saturday, January 26th, the City placed several large dumpsters at three different locations around town. The one-day event allowed city residents to dump debris they have been collecting at their homes. The occasion is part of the City's on-going effort to clean-up the community. The hours were from 9 am to Noon. However, the dumpsters were filled within a two hour period. In order to use this free service, the person only had to show some type of ID indicating they live within the city limits.

It is anticipated, that in the near future, another weekend Clean-up day with dumpsters will be provided to citizens. The date will be announced in social media and city media sources..



City Ordering First-Ever Ladder Fire Truck

At the present time, the City Fire Department doesn't have the necessary equipment to externally reach fires in buildings over three stories high. This also presents a problem for businesses that will want to move to Aransas Pass, but requires the City to have the necessary firefighting equipment. A ladder fire truck will solve that problem. Most of the cities around Aransas Pass have a ladder truck. Aransas Pass does not. Such equipment also will help with our City's ISO rating which impacts home owner insurance rates. Pictured above is the type of fire truck being ordered. It has a ladder that reaches 100 feet vertically. It also can extend horizontally and 20% below grade for water rescues.

Currently, it is necessary for the City to replace Fire Engine #2 because, over the years, the undercarriage has become severely rusted to the point where it soon will be inoperable. Instead of replacing this vehicle, Fire Chief Nathan Kelley is suggesting that we go ahead and purchase the much needed ladder truck. In other words, with a ladder truck there will be no need to replace Engine #2. The ladder truck cost will be \$1.4 million.

During a January City Council meeting, the City Council authorized City Staff to continue working toward the goal of acquiring the ladder truck. The vehicle will be paid for with bonds. In FY21 a significant amount of the City's current bonds will be freed up allowing for a comfortable debt service coverage on the new fire truck. It will take a year to build the truck.

CONN BROWN ENVIRONMENTAL WORK GOING WELL

About a year ago, City officials met with TCEQ and asked them to identify the sites at Conn Brown Harbor that were polluted. They identified three. The state was angry with the City for taking more than 10 years to remediate the problem. Over a decade ago, the Texas Land Office put liens on the harbor as leverage to require the City to clean up the environmental problems. Because the work was never completed, those liens have remained in place to this day. Cleaning up the sites began a year ago as directed by the current Mayor and Council. One of the sites is now completed. A second is nearly clean. The third will require a few more months of testing. When that is complete, after more than a decade, Conn Brown will be turned back over to the City. The state has recently commended the City for taking action to solve this pollution problem which dates back to the days when Aransas Pass was a shrimping industry.



LOW EXPENDITURES MAKE UP FOR LOW REVENUES

Beginning with the December financial report to the City Council, it was clear that revenue for the City is down. In large part, this is due to declining sales tax receipts after a year of extraordinary post-hurricane sales tax figures. The blue bar represents 2018. The brown bar represents 2019. This change could be a result of local hurricane repairs coming to an end. On the other hand, expenditures are down considerably which places the city in a strong financial position.

