

SUGAR LAND TODAY

PUBLISHED BY THE CITY OF SUGAR LAND ONE OF AMERICA'S BEST

February - March 2007



Museum Satellite Facility Coming to Sugar Land

A wide array of educational programs

Sugar Land is poised to turn the Central State Farm building in Telfair into the first satellite museum for the Houston Museum of Natural Science outside Houston's museum district.

After looking into potential venues introduced by the City, the Museum expressed interest as their preferred site the old prison building, at 12910 University Boulevard, in the Newland Communities' Telfair development. The Greek Revival structure was built in 1930 to serve Central State Farm prison. The Museum's Board has provided a positive direction going forward with

See "Museum" on page 13

Hike and Bike Trail Will Encompass Entire City

Citywide meeting in March for public input

The City of Sugar Land is updating its Hike and Bike Trail Master Plan. Trails have been identified as a high priority in the City's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. Its main goal is to plan a connected system of off-street and on-street routes for pedestrians and bicyclists for exercise, recreation and mobility. The plan will focus on connecting neighborhoods to parks, schools, libraries, shopping areas and other neighborhoods.

Citizen input is an important part of the master plan process. A task force, made up of citizens representing the various neighborhoods within the City, continues to provide staff with information on current and desired sections of trail. Working with the City's consultant, Half Associates, task force members voted on the sections they believed to be most desirable.

Safe routes along roadways,



Identifying the trails, left to right: John Braswell, Hike and Bike Task Force; Joe Chesser, assistant director, Parks and Recreation; Task Force members Josh McGee, André McDonald, Darrell Sterns.

drainage channels, levees and easements are being identified throughout the City. Many neighborhoods, new and established, have a well-used network of sidewalks. Along with these on-street routes, many residents walk and run on off-street corridors such as levees and drainage easements. Because many of these connections are crucial for a citywide linked system, City staff has been making presentations to levee improve-

ment districts and homeowners associations to obtain input from these groups.

A Citywide meeting will be held at the end of March to receive public input. Recommendations will be presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and at a later date there will be a workshop with City Council. The date and location of the March meeting will be publicized on the City's Web site and in local publications.

Safe Driving **8**

Map of construction projects along S.H. 6, U.S. 90A and U.S. 59

Animal Shelter **11** update

Task force named for animal shelter initiative

Citizen Survey **13** Results



Most Sugar Land residents satisfied with City services



While we may think we are doing a good job for you, the only meaningful perspective is yours. Every two years, the City contracts with an independent research firm to survey our citizens.

I am happy to report that once again the vast majority of Sugar Land residents are quite satisfied with the way our City is being managed and the way City services are being delivered. (See story, page 13, for more on the Citizen Survey.) We continue to receive very high marks for the quality of life, living in a well-planned community and satisfaction with city services in return for dollars paid.

City Services Evaluated

The statistically valid telephone survey was conducted last fall. To those of you who participated in the survey, we appreciate your input.

The survey questions corre-

sponded to the six City Council goals listed to the right on this page. Survey respondents were asked to evaluate City services and their contact with City employees.

The results of this survey indicate—once again—the overall satisfaction with police and fire services.

There was citizen concern, however, with our mobility and traffic. We are half way through highway expansion projects that are absolutely necessary. We take your comments very seriously, however, and are taking a hard look at traffic management and mobility issues.

It is very satisfying that the survey's ratings remained high or significantly increased from 2004.

Striving For Excellence

Of course we can always do better and strive to do so. I am asking all City department heads to study the survey results and determine how we can improve overall efficiency.

What pleased me most about the survey results was the excellent job our City employees are doing. Most City of Sugar Land employees have a single work focus: deliver exceptional service to you, their ultimate bosses. They are not satisfied with the status quo. A perfect example of this is Bindu Hansen, our 2006 Employee of the Year. Please see the article about Bindu in

this issue.

Employees are proud to work for the City of Sugar Land. Cities have an enormous responsibility: to assure a quality lifestyle in a safe environment for the citizens who live there. We turn on the tap and quality water comes forth, the washer drains, the rain water doesn't pond or flood, traffic signals work, streets are in good repair, trash and recycling is picked up, there are ample events in our parks and at Town Square. Perhaps most importantly we know there are people on the very front lines of public safety—police and fire personnel—who will respond in an emergency.

We know operations are working when citizens do not have to think about these services. I am very satisfied if you take them for granted!

Again, to everyone who took part in the survey, many thanks. If you did not take part in the survey but have suggestions, please call ASK CITY at 281-275-2489, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday, or e-mail to askcity@sugarlandtx.gov.

SUGAR LAND GOALS

- Well-planned community
- Safest city in the area
- Strong local economy
- Responsible city government
- Mobility for people
- Livable neighborhoods

CITY COUNCIL

David G. Wallace
Mayor

Thomas Abraham
At-Large Position One

Daniel O. Wong
At-Large Position Two

Dennis C. Parmer
Single Member District One

Cyril Hosley
Single Member District Two
Mayor Pro Tem

Russell C. Jones
Single Member District Three

Michael S. Schiff
Single Member District Four

CITY MANAGEMENT

Allen Bogard
City Manager

David Ellison
Assistant City Manager

Karen Glynn
Assistant City Manager

Contributors

Jennifer Brown, Mike Goodrum, Steve Griffith, Glenda Gundermann, Mark Hochstein, Shashi Kumar, Mike Leech, Richard Mancilla, Jennifer May, Regina Morales, Andy Peal, Kelly Penewitt, Dale Rudick, Phil Savko, Tracey Siu, Adam Smith, Dannie Smith, SuEllen Staggs, Donna Svatek, Andrew Temple, Pat Walsh



SLtv16—Sugar Land's Municipal Channel

Tired of re-runs and the local Houston news programs? Try some reality TV at its very best: SLtv16, Sugar Land's own television station.

SLtv is on channel 16 for all Time Warner cable subscribers in the City.

For the current SLtv16 schedule, go to

www.sugarlandtx.gov. You'll also find a list of archived SLtv programs as well as streaming video of SLtv.

Sugar Land Today is published every two months by the City of Sugar Land. Send your comments to: editor@sugarlandtx.gov.

Time Flies When You're Having Fun!

On December 7, 2006, at the annual employee banquet, Mike Kruszyuski and Howard Christian took the stage as the audience of fellow employees applauded their 25 years of service. Twenty-five years after starting their jobs for the City of Sugar Land, they remain close friends, even playing in the same softball league.

On a morning in early April 1981, Mike Kruszyuski sat down for a job interview with Ralph Stanley, superintendent of Sugar Land's water and wastewater department, on a hard wooden bench in the old city hall. "He was very special, and he became a kind of father-figure to me and others," Mike says of the late Mr. Stanley. Mike was hired and two weeks later started work for the City.

"I was hired as the back hoe operator, and the first day on the job there was a broken water main, over on



Howard Christian and Mike Kruszyuski: Sugar Land employees—and friends—since 1981.

Greywood Street, I think. I met the crew—there were only six of us in the department, including Mr. Stanley," says Mike.

"Maybe there were 8,000 people in Sugar Land then, and we ate at either Sugar Burger or Cleburne's Cafeteria. Those were the only restaurants. I think it was in '86 that Sugar Creek was

annexed and then things really took off, and it hasn't stopped or slowed down since."

Over the years Mike has gone from public works to engineering. He became crew chief over water and sanitation, had more promotions and is today senior construction inspector in engineering.

"I started two weeks after Mike," says Howard Christian,

utilities manager, water and wastewater. Ralph Stanley also hired Howard. "I was 19, came home for the summer from Sam Houston State, and took a summer job, laborer... I just could never seem to quit."

And Howard could never really quit his academics either: he received his BS degree in humanities and social studies four years ago. "It was the 20-year college plan," he says.

"It was a small crew in '81, and we worked well together," says Howard. "With only two water production plants, First Colony became more prominent. We started putting in interconnects, in case of emergency. Next thing you know, First Colony was annexed."

He reminisces about his first year on the job. "Eldridge was a two lane black top, U.S. 59 had just opened. Everyone in town seemed to work for Imperial, or be retired from there."

MYAC Sets 2007 Agenda

It has been a busy few months for the City of Sugar Land's Mayor's Youth Advisory Council (MYAC). After their September induction, these Sugar Land teens met in October to set the agenda for the year, campaigned a Code of Conduct in November and volunteered for numerous events, such as Saturday Night LYF, Boo Bash, and the City's Christmas Tree Lighting.

The group recently met to plan three more major service projects for this spring: continuation of the Internet Safety program for middle school

students, development of a Teen Web site page that will be part of the City's site, and a Family & Community Service Day which will be open to the public and is scheduled for April 15 at Oyster Creek Park. These projects will address some of the most important issues facing the youth in Sugar Land today. Be sure to keep an eye out for further details about these projects and don't forget to save the date for the April 15th event!

For more information, please call 281-275-2710 or e-mail myac@sugarlandtx.gov.

Serve Sugar Land—New Way to Participate in City Activities

Serve Sugar Land is an exciting new program that is strictly for residents of Sugar Land who are VIP'S — volunteers in public service. As a volunteer, you will have the opportunity of being a valued part of your City and being involved in a wide variety of special events and programs.

There are abundant opportunities in the Parks and Recreation Department and other departments at Sugar

Land City Hall. You can tell us about your special interests and talents, and we will work to find the perfect place for you to plug into the heart of "One of America's Best."

Your qualifications must include an interest in your City and fellow citizens and a sense of adventure.

For more information about *Serve Sugar Land* or to apply, call 281-275-2489 or go to www.sugarlandtx.gov.



Major Employers Bring Jobs, New Revenue to City

Sugar Land had an extremely successful year in attracting new investment and creating new jobs and commercial investment. The City has seen consistent growth of commercial development, including steady growth in both assessed valuation and sales tax receipts, which allows the City to maintain one of the lowest tax rates in Texas.

Primary job creation resulted from a growing economy and aggressive economic development program focused on direct business recruitment and retention processes. The City's recent national recognitions and a focused national and international marketing program also contributed to these successes. The end result was a commitment of over \$135 million new investments, creation of 580 new jobs and the retention of 250 existing jobs in companies that chose to remain and expand in Sugar Land rather than relocate to a new community.

Expansion Projects or Major Corporate Relocations in 2006

Company	Project Type	Square Feet	Number of New Jobs	Value
Tramontina USA	Expansion-Phase 3	175,000	60	\$17,000,000
	Expansion-Phase 4	299,000	20	\$21,900,000
	Expansion-Phase 5	315,000	60	\$25,000,000
Unique Industrial Products	Expansion	75,000	15	\$1,200,000
Advance Polybag Texas	Headquarters, Manufacturing and Distribution Center	150,000	40	\$26,000,000
Fingers Furniture	Corporate Headquarters and Distribution Center	369,364	170	\$27,000,000
Naztec	Headquarters, Design and Manufacturing Facility	97,000	25	\$2,500,000
Bechtel Equipment Operations	Regional Headquarters relocation	41,600	40	\$8,750,000
Pharmedium	Pharmaceutical Processing Facility	20,000	50	\$4,000,000
MECO	Engineering, Assembly, Test and Distribution Facility	50,000	100	\$4,000,000

The 2006 list of primary employers announcing either expansion projects or major corporate relocations include:

Bechtel Equipment Opera-

tions, Fingers Furniture Company and Advance Polybag Inc. all made the decision to relocate their corporate headquarters to Sugar Land in 2006. All to-

taled, these projects will create over 1.5 million sq. ft. in new facilities, providing new opportunities for Sugar Land residents and existing businesses.

Next Issue: Many Small Businesses Opening, Relocating to Sugar Land

community

Important 2007 City Election Dates

The official filing period for the May 12 Sugar Land City Council election is Feb. 12 and continues to March 12 at 5 p.m. The office of council members to Single-Member Districts One, Two, Three and Four will be on the ballot; each position will serve a two-year term.

For City Council

seats, individuals must be 21 years of age and be a resident of Sugar Land for at least one year preceding the election; and as a district council member maintain a residence in the district to which they represent. Council members may not hold other City offices or be employed by the City during the term of office or within

two years thereafter.

The April-May issue of *Sugar Land Today* will contain candidate and voting location details.

For additional information concerning the election, contact the City Secretary office at 281-275-2730, e-mail citysec@sugarlandtx.gov or stop by City Hall, 2700 Town Center Boulevard North, Suite 122.

February

12 First day to file for place on City ballot

March

12 Last day to file for place on City ballot

13 First day to apply for City ballot by mail

April

12 Last day to register to vote

30 First day of early voting by personal appearance

May

4 Last day to apply for ballot by mail

5 Weekend early voting 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

6 Weekend early voting 1 - 5 p.m.

8 Last day of early voting

12 General Election 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

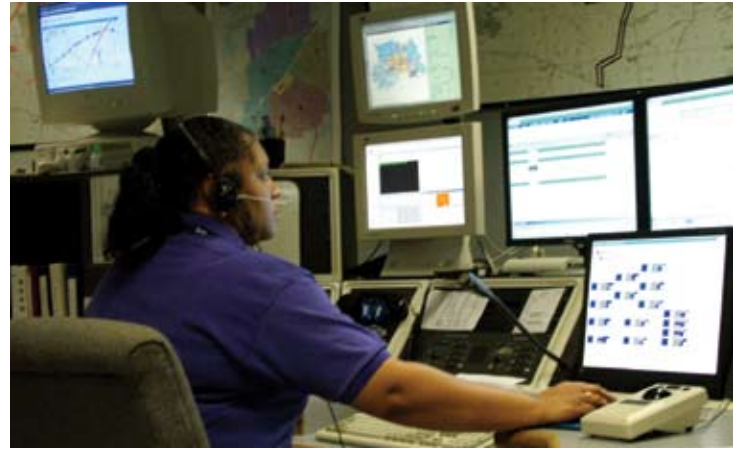
Good Security is both Prevention and Anticipation

The overwhelming majority of Sugar Land residents have a sense of being safe—in their neighborhood, while shopping and in the City's parks. The feeling of public safety has been mentioned frequently in the numerous awards the City has received.

Providing a secure and safe environment for citizens is the most important job

for any city. Our police and fire personnel are on the very front lines of public safety, ready to respond to emergencies. A city also works diligently to ensure security of public facilities, parks and municipal transportation (including airport) and of the public works—streets and drainage—and the water and wastewater utilities.

And provision of security



Sugar Land Public Safety Dispatch: calming callers while soliciting information for an appropriate emergency response.

for any community mandates a partnership between emergency and law enforcement personnel and the citizens.

The City of Sugar Land takes as its greatest responsi-

bility the safety of its citizens and citizens in surrounding communities. To that end, the City has initiated a number of programs and protocols in recent years:

- Creation of an emergency management office; coordination of public safety and emergency medical operations; training of emergency responders and bio-terrorism and hazardous incident preparation.
- Through partnership with neighboring municipalities, and with \$1.5 million in Homeland Security funding, created a hazardous material (HAZMAT) response operation, including a state-of-the-art HAZMAT vehicle and trailer stationed at a Sugar Land Fire Department station.
- 40-hour Dispatch Training Academy with emphasis on assessment of the emergency situation, allocation of necessary resources and provision of instructions before help arrives.
- High-rise training: once a month, firefighters go through high-rise training that includes building construction, preplans, on-site tours, hazards and ventilation to date.
- City of Sugar Land facilities are secured by the use of key cards for elevator and office area access.
- Post-9/11, the City developed a Security Master Plan for enhanced protection of people and assets. Understandably, much of the plan is confidential. The emphasis of City security in Phase One of the Master plan has expanded the use of security cards in municipal buildings and utility sites, monitored at Public Safety Dispatch. Phase Two of the plan is focusing on intrusion detection.
- Sugar Land Regional Airport follows the Transportation Security Administration's Security Guidelines for General Aviation Airports.
- The police and fire departments used federal/state grant money to upgrade radio equipment that improved daily radio communications needs during emergencies. First responders were tied into the SmartZone system, a multi-site tower communication system and compatible radio system. The system allows public safety professionals to communicate at the scene with other police officers, firefighters, hazardous material and experts from 462 other SmartZone-participating entities in a 13-county region, including agencies in Harris, Wharton, Montgomery, Liberty, Galveston, Fort Bend and Chambers counties.
- SLPD's expanded Community Assistance Support Team utilizes uniformed volunteers to check handicap parking spaces for violators, patrol parks, assist with police training and perform emergency management roles.
- A Specialized Enforcement District encompassing the Town Center area was created based on analysis of police service needs in the expanding commercial area, ensuring that existing patrol officers remain in their respective beats to efficiently respond to residents' needs.
- The Traffic Management Center remote manages the City's 67 traffic signals based on images provided by traffic management cameras. Technicians are able to facilitate a smooth flow of traffic during heavy times such as rush hours and assist emergency response teams enroute to a scene.
- Sugar Land's solicitation ordinance was updated to provide background checks of applicants, substantial penalties for violations of the ordinance, solicitation hours and a solicitation registry/licensing process.

General Aviation Complex Project Now Underway

Sugar Land Regional Airport is building one of the largest and most technically advanced general aviation complexes in the state of Texas. The T-hangar complex (so called because of the design shape of the hangars) will replace the aging and outdated small aircraft hangars.

The \$23.2 million project is funded through TxDOT

aviation grants totaling \$18 million and airport revenue. As an enterprise, the airport is able to support general aviation through the growth and revenues from corporate aviation.

Among the aircraft to base in Sugar Land are single-engine and twin-engine aircraft. The complex will include up to 100 T-hangars, a landscaped frontage road,

security fencing and controlled access, self-fueling, flight planning and waiting areas and meeting rooms. The flight school and aviation businesses will move to the complex. All

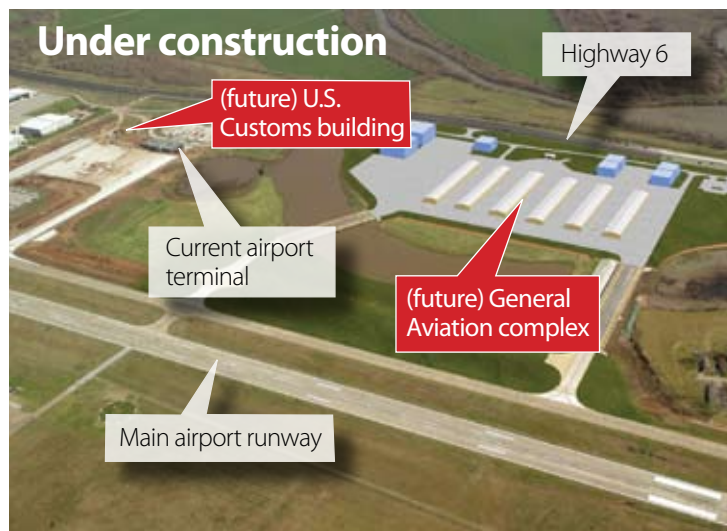
The complex will include up to 100 T-hangars, a landscaped frontage road, security fencing and controlled access, self-fueling, flight planning and waiting areas and meeting rooms.

of the airport's current tenants will have the opportunity to move to a new T-hangar.

Current work involves earthwork, drainage and underground utilities; the next phase

of the project will be concrete taxiways and apron areas. The final phase will be construction of the hangars in 2008.

An important ecological highlight was the wetlands mitigation project. In exchange for construction of the taxiways and T-hangars, 30 acres of wetlands were restored at the entrance to the Brazos Bend State Park.



Aerial photograph of the airport with artist's rendering of the GA complex.



Currently, utility work—water, wastewater, fire protection—is under construction on the 66-acre plot of land.

Airport Builds a Customs Facility for International Corporate Travelers

International air traffic to Sugar Land Regional Airport has grown significantly in just the past year, from seven aircraft clearances a month to more than 30. Corporate flights from Europe, India, Asia and South America now regularly use

the airport, and international traffic will only increase as the airport—and Sugar Land—strives to meet the needs of the global traveller.

The airport is building a U.S. Customs facility. A U.S. Customs officer has been operating at the airport

in a temporary facility. The new, 1800-square-foot Customs building will open in the spring of 2007.

Sugar Land Regional Airport is a “user-fee” or “enterprise” operation generating its own revenue.

The new U.S. Customs

building is being paid for entirely with airport revenue.

Over 100 Fortune 500 companies regularly utilize the airport, which sees more than 8,600 clearances—take-offs and landings—a month. For more information, go to www.flysgl.com.

State-of-the-Art HAZMAT Team Ready to Roll 24/7

The East Fort Bend County Hazardous Material Team, stationed in Sugar Land, was utilized during a recent chemical release at the Nalco plant at U.S. Highway 90A near State Highway 6. Firefighters worked closely with Nalco's haz-mat team to assist in containing a chemical release from a tanker truck at the facility. As part of the City's contribution, an "after action" report is being prepared looking at the HAZMAT response, communication outreach to

the public and effectiveness of Reverse 9-1-1.

An important part of Sugar Land's emergency response efforts is public communication. During the recent chemical response, a number of tools were used to provide important information to the public. These included the local broadcast media, the City's Web site and the second implementation of a new phone-based alert system.

Sugar Land's HAZMAT vehicle and trailer and hazardous material team is based

at Sugar Land Fire Station #5, where five firefighters are available 24/7 for hazardous material response in Fort Bend and 13 surrounding counties. The direct benefit to Sugar Land and Fort Bend is a 50 percent reduction in hazardous material response time.

Ongoing training is an important part of the team's effectiveness. Federal grant funds have enabled personnel to attend nationally recognized hands-on chemical training, as well as other classes that place personnel in

live situations.

Local training often involves partnerships with local businesses, including Nalco. Most recently, the Sugar Land Fire Department partnered with Union Pacific Railroad on a three-day training simulation focusing on hazardous material response.

Annual training with Nalco and others helps build partnerships, identify hazardous materials in the community, provide guidance to develop and evaluate the community emergency response plan and test emergency preparedness.

During Emergencies, Sugar Land Can Call You

An early warning system utilized to issue a shelter in place during the recent chemical release at Nalco has prompted some questions from the community.

Here's how it works:

Known as Reverse 9-1-1, the system allows Sugar Land to provide citywide or area-specific telephone instructions to citizens during emergencies, such as gas leaks, flooding or other major weather-related emergencies.

The messages utilize the greater Harris County 9-1-1 Reverse 9-1-1 early neighborhood detection system. Sugar Land's fees are only incurred when Reverse 9-1-1 is activated at a per call rate for successful connections.

Reverse 9-1-1 is a target notification system allowing a specific area to be designated for rapid calling

and delivery of emergency messages. Emergency management officials identify designated areas for delivery of the emergency messages. It's like having 9-1-1 call you. Reverse 9-1-1 utilizes Harris County's 9-1-1 database, the most accurate available; it is updated several times per day and includes both published and non-published telephone numbers.

The early warning system is capable of making 1,152 simultaneous calls. When the phones are answered, a message is delivered. The system calls back unanswered and busy numbers, keeping records of all calls. Reverse 9-1-1 is one of many communication tools utilized by Sugar Land during an emergency. It's an effective means of getting the word out, but it's not 100 percent effective.

Messages will only be delivered to phones within the area targeted by City officials. Other reasons for undeliverable messages include wrong numbers, busy signals, modem/fax numbers and unanswered calls. Cell phone numbers cannot be added to the emergency warning system database, and there are still many Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) numbers that are not part of the database. VOIP providers like Time Warner and Vonage that offer traditional 9-1-1 service have provided their numbers for the early warning system database, enabling their customers to receive Reverse 9-1-1 messages.

Sugar Land's participation in Reverse 9-1-1 is part of an ongoing commitment to emergency preparedness and response efforts.

80th Texas Legislative Session Underway

The 80th Texas Legislature convened its biennial legislative session on January 9, 2007. City Council has approved a legislative agenda that opposes legislation that may impose unfunded mandates or erode the authority of city government. (This agenda was detailed in the City Manager's Letter in the Dec.-Jan. issue of *Sugar Land Today*.)

Elected leaders have allowed the City to grow in a fiscally sound manner with one of the lowest city tax rates in the State for cities of our size. It is imperative that our council is able to govern in both a responsible and responsive manner.

The 80th session just got underway and as of January 27, 2007, there have been approximately 1,491 bills introduced with approximately 253 bills that indirectly or direct impact cities. *Sugar Land Today* will continue to keep you posted as this session unfolds.

For information about the Texas legislature, go to www.capitol.state.tx.us.

Highway expansion overview

The City of Sugar Land continues to partner with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to minimize traffic congestion during highway expansion projects. For more detail about the projects, go to www.sugarlandtx.gov and click on Highway Construction. To report a traffic signal problem, call the City's Public Works Department, 281-275-2450. We thank you for your patience.

Detail Area

From 9 p.m. Friday, February 16, through 5 a.m. Monday, February 19, 2007, U.S. 59 main lanes **will be closed entirely**, northbound and southbound, at S.H. 99 as the S.H. 99 bridge is demolished.

Williams Way

F.M. 2759

- U.S. 59 South
- U.S. 59 North
- S.H. 99 and F.M. 2759



Crabb River Rd.

Grand Parkway

99
TEXAS

Brazos
Turnaround

59

All main lane traffic on U.S. 59 will be diverted to the frontage roads at S.H. 99. Traffic may re-enter U.S. 59 after passing through the S.H. 99 or F.M. 2759 intersections. U.S. 59 frontage road traffic will be able to access S.H. 99 and F.M. 2759.

Similarly, traffic approaching U.S. 59 from S.H. 99 or F.M. 2759 will be diverted to the U.S. 59 frontage roads and can enter U.S. 59 at Williams Way or the Brazos River turnaround.

On Feb. 19, U.S. 59 main lanes will re-open; however, traffic will not be able to cross U.S. 59 on S.H. 99 until March 2.

We strongly urge motorists to look for other routes during this period.

99
TEXAS

59

BRAZOS
RIVER

Tentatively, in late March, U.S. 59 southbound main lane traffic will be switched from the existing Brazos River bridge to the newly constructed southbound frontage road bridge at the river.



90A

Phase Two

North side of the highway, or west bound lanes; construction will begin at completion of Phase One; completion expected in 2008.

Phase One

South side of the highway, or east bound lanes; completion expected fall 2007. Sound and access barrier walls are being constructed at Venetian Estates and Alkire Estates; completion expected fall 2007.

U.S. 90A is being widened from four to eight lanes between U.S. 59 and Ulrich Street, just west of Brooks. Two temporary lanes in each direction serve traffic during the construction.

State Highway 6 is being widened from four to six lanes in a two-mile stretch from First Colony/Brooks Street to north of U.S. 90A. Two lanes will remain open in each direction during peak hours. S.H. 6 bridge construction over University and U.S. 90A continues.




OYSTER CREEK

Town Square

Completion of the northbound University Blvd. and u-turns under the new U.S. 59 bridge is ongoing. Once this is complete, traffic will be shifted onto northbound pavement for the completion of the southbound lanes.

University Blvd.

Project legend

 U.S. 59  U.S. 90A  Highway 6

Partnership for Progress



Throughout the entire construction process, Sugar Land residents can stay informed of closures and detours:

- **Visit** the highway construction link on www.sugarlandtx.gov.
- **Watch** SLtv 16 for videos and other information.
- **Subscribe** to E-news at www.sugarlandtx.gov for e-mail updates.
- **Watch** for message and detour signs on the roadway.
- **Call** the telephone hotlines 24/7:

City of Sugar Land
Highway Hotline
281-276-9959

TxDot Public Information
Hotline:
713-802-5074



Flood Insurance Desirable in Our Area

Fact: Texas consistently ranks first in the nation in property loss and loss of life because of flooding. The Texas Gulf Coast is very flat and is subject to tropical weather conditions resulting in high intensity rainfall. However, the flat terrain impedes the flow of storm water, thereby contributing to higher flooding risks.

Fact: According to the Fed-

This is the third in a series. See SLT, Aug.-Sept. 2006, Drainage Master Plan, and SLT, Oct.-Nov. 2006, Levee Improvement Districts.

eral Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), only about 12 percent of homes and businesses in Sugar Land have flood insurance.

When you consider 1.) the calamitous damage of flooding and 2.) the reasonable cost of flood insurance... well, there's

just no good reason to go without it.

What the City's Doing

Sugar Land's Capital Improvement Plan includes numerous projects (totaling approximately \$23 million

in the Five Year plan, 2007-2011) in ditch extensions and improvements, storm sewer improvement, street sewer inlet work and creation of detention areas. The city partners with Fort Bend County Drainage District, Levee Improvement Districts (LIDs), municipal utility districts and FEMA in

See "Insurance" on page 12

Utility Rate Study Complete

Over the last eight months, City staff has been working with R.W. Beck, Inc. to evaluate the City's water and wastewater system. Recommendations from the engineering consulting firm include changes to the rate

structure where needed to ensure equity among different users (residential, commercial, landscape) while generating revenues sufficient to support the operations of the utility system. The City's utility system is a self-supporting

enterprise fund; all operations of the system are supported through user charges. The study is complete and a report was presented to City Council January 23; approval of the ordinance recommending changes to the City's utility

rate structure was scheduled for February 6, with the new rates to take effect March 1, 2007. The changes will be phased in over a three-year period to minimize impacts to ratepayers. The following are key points in the report:

Monthly Service

Increase the monthly base charges so that 35 percent of water revenues and 40 percent of wastewater revenues are recovered through the base charges. The current monthly service charges generate about 25 percent of total revenues. Ratepayers will see an increase in the monthly base charge.

Proposed increase of monthly base rates:

- 5/8" and 3/4" meters: \$3.06
- 1" meters: \$4.91

Wastewater

The residential winter average will be changed to include January and February water consumption only (avoiding holiday periods when many households can have significant variations in occupants due to guests and/or vacations). The average established by these two months of consumption will set the volume of wastewater to be billed for the following twelve months (March- February), with a citywide maximum to be established for any single-family residence. Residents will be billed the same amount for wastewater each month, with the winter average recalculated each March. This method differs from the current winter average calculation, which is explained in more detail on the City's Web site.

Surface Water

As the City prepares to convert from groundwater to surface water sources, the City needs to develop infrastructure to meet this need. In April 2006, the City began setting aside funding within the current water rate structure to support this need. This funding will be separated from the water volumetric rates and be shown on the utility bill as a separate fee per 1,000 gallons consumed. As the City must shift 30 percent of water usage to non-groundwater sources by 2013, this fee will be adjusted in the future as needed.

Watch the City's Web site www.sugarlandtx.gov and the next issue of *Sugar Land Today* for more information on the utility rates and how the changes will impact you.

Water

The City's current structure of billing based on levels of consumption will remain the same. By separating the surface water fees from the water rates, the actual rates per 1,000 gallons will decrease from the current rates. Residential rates will increase as consumption increases, with the same rate block structure as currently outlined on the City's Web site.

Large Crowd Celebrates Opening of New Senior Center

A cold, damp day didn't chill the spirits for the grand opening of the new Senior Center on January 19. In fact, the weeks of anticipation gave way to excitement and exuberance. A standing-room-only crowd participated in festivities and some danced away the afternoon to the great music by the Johnny Dyson Combo Band.

The Senior Center has been under renovation for the better part of a year, with an



The new Senior Center met with a happy reception at its dedication ceremony.

expansion from 1,900 square feet to 5,500 square feet. The new facility includes a game room, library, arts and crafts room, computer room, two coffee bars, and three television

areas—with two High Definition and one Plasma set.

Clearly, there had been need for expanded space. No significant increase in space had occurred since 1997.

Neighborhood Integrity Program Underway

Nearly half of Sugar Land's neighborhoods are older than 20 years. All neighborhoods in Sugar Land have a distinct vitality—and they are cited over and over in the many awards Sugar Land has garnered.

It is of paramount importance that Sugar Land neighborhoods remain healthy and vibrant. The Community and Environmental Services Department was created in 2006 (as a City Council strategy for Livable Neighborhoods) to address neighborhood integrity.

Operationally, this strategy is proactive—keeping neighborhoods from decline. Initially, the department will begin a public education and outreach initiative to educate homeowners about ordinances. Additionally, a new em-

phasis on code enforcement is being undertaken. Finally, the City has developed an abandoned house/unique situations protocol and encourage HOAs to notify the City of vacant houses.

We've all noticed the occasional property where tall weeds and overgrown bushes seem to be the only features on the lot; it makes the property and the neighborhood unattractive. But tall grass and weeds aren't just unsightly—they are a serious hazard and offer a place for rodents and other pests to live. To reduce this risk, lawns should be kept mowed and all yard waste such as dry grass, cut tree limbs and brush should be properly disposed of. A well-maintained yard is also an effective crime prevention tool. Lawns that are not

cared for give criminals the impression the property is unattended and might be an easy target.

For most people, our homes are our biggest asset, and few of us move into a home with the intention of letting the property value decrease. But, as busy as most of us are these days, it can be difficult to keep up with the daily demands of our homes. Whether it's painting the siding or putting up new gutters, it seems like every time we turn around another home project needs to be addressed.

We all know that there are serious consequences of ignoring our homes, such as poor living conditions and decreasing property values.

In the next issue of *Sugar Land Today*, some helpful checklists.

Animal Shelter Task Force Hard at Work

The recently created Animal Control Task Force, which is comprised of active community volunteers and members of the Animal Control Advisory Board, began work in January on a new animal shelter approved in the 2007 budget. The group is currently reviewing conceptual plans and visiting other communities with successful adoption and volunteer programs. They will make a recommendation to the City Manager in early March and shortly thereafter a final facility design will be presented to City Council for approval.

Special thanks to the following task force members for their hard work and dedication to this community: Dr. James Cox, Julie Ewbank, Dan Guzman, Donna Hammond, Sharon Rode, Dinesh Shah, Marsha Smith, Suzanne Wege and Fred Williams.



Sugar Land, FB MUD 1 Enter Annexation Agreement

At its January 2, 2007, meeting, Sugar Land City Council approved a proposed Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) with Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 1.

The SPA provides for a Limited Purpose annexation followed by a Full Purpose annexation and the dissolution of the District in December 2009. City annexation practice ensures that annexations are voluntary, that the new residents benefit from the annexation and that existing City residents do not bear the burden of cost in extending these benefits.

MUD 1 is bordered by U.S. 59 and the Brazos River,

and it is intersected by the Grand Parkway. There are approximately 1,500 residents in MUD 1. The dominant residential community is Riverpark.

Residents of municipal utility districts do not pay property taxes until the dissolution of the district and formal annexation takes place. The SPA between Sugar Land and MUD 1 does call for the imposition of a sales and use tax within the District during the Limited Purpose annexation; the City will return 50 percent of sales and use tax for district infrastructure projects and general purposes. The City will continue to provide fire protection under

an existing agreement; law enforcement protection will be provided by Ford Bend County Sheriff's Office until full annexation.

The District will participate in the City's groundwater reduction plan, paying the City a one-time fee of \$35 per household utility connection plus a monthly pumpage charge of 25 cents per 1000 gallons of water produced.

"MUD 1 proposed this mutually beneficial agreement," says Jim Callaway, executive director of Community Development for the City. "It is a true win-win agreement that results in positive fiscal impacts for the District and the City."

Insurance

Continued from page 10

drainage projects and public information initiatives. The City is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and has adopted flood damage prevention regulations aimed at minimizing flood losses.

Some Myths

Homeowners can have a false sense of security because their homes are not located within a 100-year flood plain, but historically about one-quarter of flood insurance claims are for homes not within these flood prone areas. In truth, we *all* live in a flood zone because rising water can be caused by any number of events—storms, overloaded drainage systems, dam or levee failure.

Home owners may also falsely think a flood would be declared a national disaster, but only the President can do

that—and even if that occurs, most likely the funds would be in the form of a loan that has to be paid back. Consider this: re-paying a small business flood-related loan of \$50,000 at \$300 a month will take many years, while a flood insurance policy is just about \$300 a year.

Another erroneous belief is that floods are large events. Flooding can occur in just a few houses—from poor drainage in the yard, for example—and not be widespread at all. Small areas of flooding would bring no disaster declaration.

Home and business owners need to realize that flooding does not have to be feet of water—just a few inches can do enormous damage to a structure and its contents.

To Learn More:

- www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/index.jsp

The Truth

Flood damage is NOT covered by a homeowner's insurance policy. Too many people have found this out too late! The City is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program—and that means Sugar Land residents are eligible to purchase flood insurance. Having flood insurance is the single best thing you can do to protect your home, business, possessions and financial security from the devastation of a flood. (Most mortgage lenders will require homes in designated high-risk areas to be covered by flood insurance.)

Homes can be insured for up to \$250,000 and the contents—including clothes, appliances, furniture, electronics—for \$100,000. (Businesses are eligible for \$1 million in coverage for building and contents.) There is a 30-day waiting period for the policy to take effect, so you should act once you have decided to get the insurance.



Congratulations to Our Employee of the Year

Bindu Nair Hansen was named 2006 Employee of the Year at the annual employee banquet, December 13, 2006. But Bindu could not be present, explained City Manager Allen Bogard, because she was home awaiting the imminent arrival of twins.

Bindu began work in the City Secretary's office as the Information process technician in March 2005. She managed the City Secretary's Web site, created Power Point presentations for City Council meetings and created an agenda template.

"Bindu conducts herself in a manner that is reflective of and follows the City Guiding Values – SPIRIT," says City Secretary Glenda Gundermann. "Through her extremely proficient technical skills and her interactive process she has enhanced and helped individuals and the organization to improve performance and achieve extraordinary results. Bindu fosters team spirit, exhibits a positive demeanor producing harmony and goodwill and serves as a role model for others."

In May 2006, Bindu was promoted to Help Desk Specialist in the Information Technology department.

City Asks Citizens: "How are we doing?" Citizens Answer.

The results are in: 91 percent of Sugar Land citizens surveyed are satisfied with City services in return for dollars paid. In the latest Citizen Satisfaction Survey conducted in late 2006, ratings remained high and in some categories significantly increased from the last survey conducted in 2004. Survey questions asked about City facilities such as parks and streets; City services such as recreational, emergency, utility, waste management and code enforcement; quality of life such as condition of neighborhoods and Sugar Land's appeal as a place to live and work; and communication between the City and citizens.

"The citizen survey is a valuable tool for City management," says Allen Bogard, City Manager. "We are analyzing the results to determine next steps in areas either needing improvement or in sustaining continued high marks. The survey is important in our strategic planning process, and I thank the citizens who gave their time for this survey."

How the survey was conducted:

The City contracted with Creative Consumer Research (CCR), a respected market research firm, for the independent survey. The statistically valid telephone survey of 501 residents averaged 17 minutes. This group size was demographically diverse in terms of age, gender and ethnicity.

Museum

Continued from page 1

the projected \$10 million deal.

"The Houston Museum of Natural Science is very excited about the opportunity to partner with the City of Sugar Land and Newland Communities to create a satellite educational facility," said Joel Bartsch, president of the Houston Museum of Natural Science. "The \$3 million of in-kind support that the Museum is providing means that once

the building is finished, we will be ready to fill it with all kinds of cool artifacts, most of which have never been publicly displayed before. These exhibits will serve as the core around which we will build a wide array of educational programs for area schools, as well as for all of Sugar Land, Fort Bend County and beyond."

The City is responsible for preparing a detailed cost estimate for construction and for spearheading efforts to raise an estimated \$6 million to complete the initial interior

Key Findings:

- 95 percent reported the Quality of Life in Sugar Land as "good" or "excellent,"—with "excellent" up significantly from 2004.
- 94 percent agreed with the statement "Sugar Land is a well-planned community that ensures compatible land use for residential, office and retail purposes," up slightly from 2004.
- At least 80 percent of the respondents felt the City adequately enforced Weeds and Tall Grass and Zoning ordinances. Satisfaction with noise enforcement significantly increased. These ratings validated recent expansion of the code enforcement area.
- Storm water drainage ratings significantly increased, matching City renovation and improvement projects that continue.
- Water/wastewater services attained at least 92% satisfaction ratings.
- Survey results showed high overall satisfaction with police and fire programs and services.
- City parks facilities received ratings at least 90 percent "good" or "excellent."
- Strong economic development initiatives over the past years boosted the ratings for job growth.
- Cultural events and entertainment significantly improved their ratings, highlighting City Council support and attendance at cultural activities.
- The Municipal Channel received significantly higher ratings than 2004, indicating increased utilization of SLtv16 as an information source.

- Overall, 18-35 year olds significantly improved their ratings. Communication outreach to Asian residents appears to be successful, with these citizens improving their ratings.

Action Steps Planned

- Further citizen input will be sought in response to lower ratings for some traffic, mobility and parks questions.
- The Police Department plans to increase focus in neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- The 2006 survey was the fourth survey conducted over eight years. Data from the survey will be used to evaluate City services and make improvements where necessary.

A summary of the entire survey report is available at www.sugarlandtx.gov.



Future home of the Museum of Natural Science satellite, a three-way partnership between Sugar Land, the Museum, and Newland Communities.

build-out design and construction and site work.

The Houston Museum of Natural Science will enter into a long-term, 50-year lease with

the City of Sugar Land and commit to contribute an estimated \$3 million to complete the final interior build-out of the facility.

Leisure Classes

**Call 281-275-2885
for registration information**

(Fees slightly higher for non-residents)

Duplicate Bridge

Sue Williams, certified ACBL Director and Teacher

When: Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 2nd, 4th and 5th (when applicable) Thursday of the month 1 to 4:30 p.m.

Fees: Resident: \$4.00 per game

No experience? No problem!

Play will accommodate all levels of experience! Space is limited, so reserve your spot today! First Colony Community Center
For more information call: 281-980-9588



Karate

Where: Eldridge Park
When: Tuesdays
January 16- April 3 (Uniform required – can be purchased from instructor)
6 p.m.: Beginners
Ages 5 – 12
7 p.m.: Advanced
Ages 5 – 12
8 p.m.: Adult
Fees: Resident: \$40

Tennis Lessons

Fort Bend Tennis Services at City Park Tennis Courts
For more information on dates and times, call: 281-980-4219

Jazzercise

When: Monday, Wednesday and Friday; 8:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m. and 5:40 p.m.
Tuesday; 5:40 p.m.
Thursday; 9:30 a.m. and 5:40 p.m.
Saturday; 8 a.m. and 9 a.m.

Where: First Colony Community Center
For more information, call: 281-437-7157
www.fortbendjazz.com

Senior Jazzercise

When: Tuesday; 9 a.m.
Thursday; 8:30 a.m.
Ages: 50 years and older
Where: Sugar Land Community Center
For more information, call: 281-437-7157
www.fortbendjazz.com

Tai Chi

When: Wednesday 7 p.m.: Beginner
Sugar Land Community Center
Ages: 14 - Adult
Fees: Resident: \$7 per class

Senior Tai Chi

When: Wednesday; 9 a.m.
Sugar Land Senior Center
Ages: 50 and older
No fee



Ballet Flamenco

Yvonne Robertson

When: Monday and Thursday
Beginner (ages 4 – 12), 4:15 p.m.
Intermediate I (ages 5 – 12), 5:20 p.m.
Lost Creek Community Center

Fees: Residents: \$70 per month
For more information on attire, call: 281-460-2412



Senior Ballet Flamenco

Yvonne Robertson

When: Friday; 10 a.m.
Sugar Land Community Center
Ages: 50 years and older
Fees: Residents: \$25 per month
For more information on attire, call: 281-460-2412

Yoga for Stress Relief

Maya Matha

Relieve stress, soothe aches and pain, strengthen mind/body/spirit connection. Learn postures, breathing and meditation.

When: Feb. 27 to April 5
April 17 to May 24
Wednesday and Friday 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.
Sugar Land Community Center

Fees: Residents: \$75 per session

Senior Adventures

Call 281-275-2893 for more information and to register for these fun adventures.

Azalea Adventure

Friday, March 2

Texas History Adventure

Wednesday, March 28

Baseball Adventure

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, April 24 - 26

If trips do not meet the minimum participants two weeks prior to the trip date, we reserve the right to cancel.



SUGAR LAND SENIOR CENTER

The newly renovated Senior Center is all dressed up and ready for you to visit and stay a while. The Senior Center is located at 200 Matlage Way and open Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

For more information on the Center and senior activities call 281-275-2893 or e-mail us at seniors@sugarlandtx.gov.

Other Activities

EGGstravaganza

Mark your calendars for the 23rd annual City of Sugar Land EGGstravaganza from noon to 3 p.m. on Friday, April 6 at Eldridge Park. Take pictures with the



Easter bunny and enjoy games such as egg hunts, sack races, petting zoo, moonwalks and many more. A magician, juggler and the fire truck will also be on site.

Egg hunts schedule:

0-4 years old	Continuously
5 years old	1 p.m.
6 years old	1:30 p.m.
7 years old	2 p.m.
8 & 9 years old	2:15 p.m.
10, 11, & 12 years old	2:30 p.m.

Youth Sports Association Information

First Colony Little League
www.fcll.net

Sugar Land Little League
www.slll.org
(281) 242-0709

Greater Sugar Land Pony & Colt Baseball League
www.gslpony.com
(281) 265-0570

Sugar Land Girls Softball Association
eteamz.active.com/slgsa
(281) 494-1085

Sugar Land Sharks Swim Team
www.sugarlandsharks.org

Sugar Land Soccer Club
www.sugarlandsoccer.org
(281) 265-4010

Eclipse Soccer
www.eclipsesoccerclub.com



The new officers of Shape Up Sugar Land, from the left: **David Blomstrom, Arnetta Yardbough, Ivo Djambov, Dee Holmes, Leigh Mattson, Nicole Volek, Andy Stewart, Steve Long, Sherrie Grogan, and Charmaine Van Niekerk.** Not pictured are **Karyn Dean, Terrie Gorney, Ken Hainline and Steve Stewart.**

Texas Roundup begins

Sugar Land is gearing up for its fourth straight "Fittest City In Texas" championship run! Be a part of keeping the title where it belongs by being part of Shape Up Sugar Land.

Governor Rick Perry's commitment to statewide health & fitness is punctuated by his annual Texas Roundup program, an opportunity for Texans to log all of their physical activity into an on-line account. Marathon runners and weight lifters aren't the only persons who qualify to take part, WE ALL

DO! Credit can be earned for gardening, lawn mowing and household tasks among many, many others!

The 2007 challenge began on February 1, 2007, so go online at: www.texasroundup.org and register TODAY! Don't forget when you register and have the option to select



which team you want to be a part of, select the "City of Sugar Land" team! For additional information, call Nicole Volek, president of Shape Up Sugar Land at 281-932-9844, or write her at dna0623@yahoo.com.



Join us on March 24, from 7-11pm at the Sugar Land Skate Park for another edition of Sk8 Late! Bring your boards & blades, friends & family for a night full of door prizes, food & refreshments. Cost of admission is **FREE** so don't miss this opportunity to showcase your skills!

calendar

Visit www.sugarlandtx.gov to confirm City events. For Town Square events, visit www.sugarlandtownsquare.com.

	Date	Event	Time	Location
MARCH	2	Senior Trip: Azalea Adventure	9 a.m.	Senior Center
	3	MYAC Service Planning Day	9 a.m.	City Hall
	6, 20, 27	City Council	5:30 p.m.	City Hall
	12	Last day to file for place on May City ballot		City Hall
	13	Planning and Zoning Commission	7 p.m.	City Hall
	13	Parks Board meeting	5:30 p.m.	City Hall
	13	First day to apply for ballot by mail		
	21-22	AARP Safe Driving	9 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Senior Center
	22	Planning and Zoning Commission	7 p.m.	City Hall
	27	Senior Trip – Texas History Adventure	7:30 a.m.	Senior Center
APRIL	3, 17, 24	City Council	5:30 p.m.	City Hall
	6	Good Friday; City offices closed; Eggstravaganza	3 p.m.	Eldridge Park
	10	Parks Board Meeting	5:30 p.m.	City Hall
	10	Planning and Zoning Commission	7 p.m.	City Hall
	12	Last day to register to vote		
	14	Don't Mess With Texas Trash-off	8:30 a.m.	Community Center
	15	MYAC Community Service Day Concert in the Park	2 p.m. and 5 p.m.	Oyster Creek Park
	19	Senior Spring Fling	5-8 p.m.	Community Center
	23	Senior Trip—Baseball Adventure	7 a.m.	City Hall
	26	Planning and Zoning Commission	7 p.m.	City Hall
	30	First day of early voting		



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