

September / October 2019



# *The Castle Hills* **Reporter**

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# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Friends,

I hope that you and your loved ones had a great summer so far! Alas school is back in session and that means school zones are back in effect. Be safe driving, plan accordingly, and watch for people crossing the streets. The good news is that cooler weather is coming and that means less costly CPS bills!

On more than one occasion, I have said this but I feel that my biggest mistake during my first term as an Alderman was not sharing my work with residents. Determined to do it differently and better, I will be starting a monthly digital newsletter. My goal is to keep everyone informed of what is going on throughout Castle Hills. I will be posting the newsletter to my website. If you are interested in joining the email list and having it sent to your inbox, I will be doing that as well! Let me clarify, I am not looking to compile an email list. Only to ensure, you have access to the newsletter. Additionally, once I have appropriated the funds, I intend to do a regular mailer for delivery to residents. Again, my intention is to be transparent and let everyone know what is going on in your City and try to reach them through various mediums as possible. If you are interested in joining my email list, please visit my website "JRTrevino.com" click "Sign Me Up". Please include your name and at a minimum, street name. My intent is to group you with your respective neighbors so I can share information that you care about in your neighborhood and the community!

Everyone has been asking what is going on in Castle Hills. I know there have been a lot of questions and concerns. First, I want to let you know that the City of Castle Hills has continued to operate seamlessly regardless of what has transpired. Mayor and City Council serve as oversight and set policy. It is not our responsibility to manage "day-to-day" operations for the City. We are very fortunate to have highly qualified executive management. Starting at the top with our City Manager, Mr. Ryan Rapelye, down to our department heads of your City is in excellent hands! The good news in your City is reported below.

As I am writing this article, we are about halfway through the budget process. I'm glad to report that your City Council has voted to keep the tax rate the same, which will mark nearly ten years that the tax rate has been sustained. Did you know that the Castle Hills tax rate is actually lower than San Antonio's tax rate? It is true! Fortunately, and unfortunately, property values are slightly higher in the City of Castle Hills. This is wonderful news when you are trying to sell but not as exciting when you are having to pay property taxes. I attribute our higher values to the top-notch City services related to public safety (Fire and Police), Public

*(Continued on page 3)*

*"The statements and facts contained in newsletter articles from the Mayor and City Council Members are their own personal views and should not be considered official city sponsored statements or facts and should not be relied upon as such."*

## CITY COUNCIL

**JR Trevino**

Mayor

**Clyde R. McCormick** *(holdover)*

Place 1

**Mark F. Sanderson**

Place 2

**Amy McLin** *(holdover)*

Place 3

**Lesley Wenger,**

Mayor Pro-Tem, Place 4

**Douglas Gregory**

Place 5

## CITY STAFF

**Ryan Rapelye**

City Manager, (210) 293-9673

**Melissa L. Gonzalez**

City Secretary, (210) 293-9681

**Vacant**

Finance, (210) 293-9674

**James "Jim" Ladewig**

Fire Department Chief

(210) 342-2341, ext. 217

**Johnny Siemens**

Police Department Chief

(210) 342-2341

**Rick Harada**

Public Works & Animal Control

Department Director

(210) 293-9676

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## Monthly Meetings

All meetings are held at  
City Hall unless otherwise posted.

**City Council**

2nd Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

**Architectural Review Committee**

1st Wednesday, 7:00pm

Upon Request

**Board of Adjustment**

4th Monday, 5:30 p.m.

Upon Request

**Zoning Commission**

1st Tuesday, 7:00pm

Upon Request

**Crime Control & Prevention  
District**

3rd Monday, 5:30pm

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**Neighborhood  
News**



(Continued from page 2)

Works and our Administration office; In my opinion, we pay less and get more!

More good news to share, the Antler street project is progressing nicely and on pace to be completed by the end of the year. As with any construction project, they can be a nuisance to deal with but the end result will make it all worth it in improving our community's infrastructure. I have requested the contractor to display signage providing basic details about the project. This is a typical operating procedure in the City of San Antonio. You will often see project postings providing the dollar amount, duration, contact information and basic scope of work. I would like to see this as a standard going forward in Castle Hills as we continue to move forward with future capital projects. It is my opinion that these postings keep the residents informed and to some extent hold the contractors accountable. It serves as a visual reminder of the project deadline.

In August, I traveled to Eagle Pass, Texas to attend the Texas Municipal League's Region 7 meeting. TML is the City's insurer and they also provide legislative guidance for Cities all over the state. These meetings are an outstanding way to meet our neighbors from surrounding areas and learn from each other. In attending multiple small meetings, I have come to realize that we all share similar problems as seeing how other Cities handle them provides great insight. Lastly, I am proud to share that I have recently been elected serve as the Region 7 Vice President for Texas Municipal League. It is my hope that my new position will allow me to be at the forefront of issues that affect Cities like Castle Hills.

As always, if I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Yours in service,

**JR Trevino, Mayor**

JTrevino@CastleHills-TX.gov

210-559-5940

**SPECIAL REMINDER:** Due to some changes, City Council has voted to call for a special election in November for Place 1 and Place 3. It is my understanding that there will not be much on the ballot in terms of elections but please remember that there will be 2 Alderman positions somewhere on the ballot. Early voting is October 21st – November 1st and election day is November 5th.



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Many of you may have noticed that there have been some changes around the Castle Hills City Hall over the last few months to improve the interior/exterior of the building.

#### Some of the changes include:

- The replacement of the trimming/facia around the building which had rotted over time.
- New 9 space covered parking protecting the marked police units.
- Removal of the front and rear main entrance glass over the doors which due to the weight was causing the framing to fail. This will allow for better energy efficient use in relations to heating/cooling plus will keep the cost down for utilities. The police department also hung some pictures which illustrate their Core Values in the main lobby.
- New surveillance cameras have been installed around the building increasing the count from 23 cameras to 34 cameras and increasing storage capabilities to approximately 30 days.
- The Police Department patrol room has been repainted from ceiling to floor; also flooring improvements have been done upstairs to the administrative offices of the police department.
- CHPD is anxiously awaiting the much-needed arrival of five new patrol units which includes the one that was totaled in the June 9th accident.

#### In Other News:

- Cpl. R. Munoz is doing well in his recovery from the June 9th accident. He is up and moving around with assistance and is anxious to return to full duty to again serve the citizens of Castle Hills.
- We welcome new Police Officers Colton Richter and Zachery Johnson both of whom are recent AACOG Police Academy graduates.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

By Ryan D. Rapelye, City Manager

### **FY 2020 Proposed Budget, Projects and Appreciation!**

#### **FY 2020 Proposed Budget:**

In the July article, I had discussed the development of the FY 2020 Proposed Budget and encouraged citizens to attend our workshops on the development of the FY 2020 Proposed Budget. This would have provided an opportunity for citizens to provide input and comment. Unfortunately, the City was unable to hold these workshops. However, there will still be a number of opportunities for citizens to speak and provide input in formulating the budget towards adoption at the upcoming hearing and meetings in September.

On August 15, 2019, the FY 2020 Proposed Budget was filed with the City Secretary. The FY 2020 Proposed Budget is available for review on the City's website. In the FY 2020 Proposed Budget, the City Manager's transmittal message provides highlights of the General Fund pertaining to overall revenue and expenses, a breakdown of all related funds and details regarding Capital expenses.

The proposed budget has been developed following a number of budget principles to ensure basic services are maintained at current levels and will be adequately funded. Our reserves will be maintained at adequate levels, which should protect the City from future uncertainties. City revenues were established at reasonable levels, utilizing historical data. Department and program costs are budgeted at a reasonable level, which parallel the cost of providing services. It also ensures certain employee benefits and salaries are budgeted accordingly, if possible, with an increase.

The General Fund is the largest fund for the City and accounts for general service and operations. The General Fund is where services such as police, permitting/planning, public works, and administration are budgeted. All of the City's employee salaries are funded through the General Fund. The proposed General Fund revenue budget totals \$7,182,882 and the expenses budget totals \$7,182,882. The General Fund budget is based on the ad valorem tax rate of \$0.501345 per \$100 of valuation.

The development of the FY2020 proposed budget is constructed on being fiscally conservative and as City Manager I proposed to City Council to sustain the current tax rate which is the same rate as that of the Adopted FY2019 Budget for General Fund operations. The total taxable assessed value (freeze not included) at the current tax of \$0.501345 per \$100 of valuation is \$572,167,902. The proposed M&O revenue is budgeted at \$3,665,626. If the current rate is to remain, the revenue difference from FY2018 to FY2019 for the General Fund would be \$180,297. This revenue increase is proposed to be used for street improvements. The reported homestead average taxable

value is \$319,656 the \$.01 cent increase equates to \$31.97 in a year.

The City Council recognizes that long-term street and drainage repairs are needed throughout the City. The Street Maintenance, Drainage-Utility and Supplemental Street Funds are available for future infrastructure projects. Revenue sources from the Street Maintenance Sales Tax and Digital Billboard, provide funds for such purposes and there is a possibility of certificates of obligation in the future. Costs for this would be reflected in the FY 2020 Proposed Budget. In the Proposed FY 2020 budget, a number of capital projects have been identified; Current projects under consideration for potential funding in FY2020 include Banyan/Glentower Watershed III – Street and Drainage Project, Mimosa/Krameria to West Avenue Drainage project (Watershed II) and the Seal Coat Project for street maintenance.

In the Capital Replacement Funds, the FY 2020 Proposed Budget includes the Contingency Fund for Major Vehicle/Equipment Purchase totaling \$261,949. This programs funds for future vehicles for Fire and Public Works. Also, in the Community Infrastructure Economic Development Program (CEID), additional dollars have been programmed to continue with much needed building repairs at City Hall. The FY 2019 adopted budget, had \$50,000 allocated for an array of interior/exterior improvements to City Hall.

In the FY 2019 Adopted Budget, funds were budgeted in the amount of \$50,000; these funds were utilized beginning January 1, 2019 for an array of interior/exterior improvement projects at City Hall. As a part of the FY 2020 Proposed Budget, \$30,000 is allocated to continue with additional facility improvements.

#### **Projects:**

The City operates in a fiscal year that begins January 1 through December 31. The outside building improvements started in early April and were suspended in mid-April so this construction would not interfere with early voting. The contractor returned after the elections and completed the fascia work to the exterior of the building.

Prior to the fascia work, other repairs had already been completed in the police department offices (upstairs and downstairs). Improvements to the City Council Chambers and fencing on the outside of the building were also completed. The last project identified for this year was the removal of the glass windows over the two entrances in the lobby which was completed at the end of August. This was done to better insulate the building and alleviate the weight on the existing doors.

Also, the police department had carports installed to protect the vehicles and equipment from the elements. Additional security cameras have been installed throughout the interior and exterior

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of City Hall. Additional cameras have been placed on the outside of the building and upgraded cameras in the council chambers. Other projects in the works or have been completed include the monument at Cas Hills and Blanco, drainage improvements at Round Up and Adobe, Atwater Drainage channel improvements and maintenance of drainage channel behind HEB at Loop 410.

In regards to Streets/drainage projects:

- **Phase III Roadway Improvements (Antler Drive)** – Construction is underway and is progressing per project schedule and within budget. Currently construction of SAWS utilities and drainage improvements is approximately 95% complete. Roadway reconstruction consisting of new base and asphalt is underway which will include new curbs, sidewalks and driveway approaches. Construction is anticipated to be fully complete by January, 2020.
- **Watershed III Phase I (Banyan and Glentower Drainage Improvements)** – Design is underway for this storm sewer and roadway reconstruction project. Currently design is at 90% phase, coordination with TxDOT and Utility Companies underway. Request for authorization to bid at October City Council meeting. Projected schedule is for construction to begin in January 2020 with a construction time of nine months.
- **Watershed II Phase I (Mimosa and Krameria Drainage Improvements)** – Design is underway for this drainage ditch and box culvert project. Currently design is at 70% phase, coordination with SAWS and homeowners is underway. Drainage easements are also being coordinated. Request for authorization to bid at November City Council meeting. Projected schedule is for construction to begin in early Spring 2020.
- **Street Maintenance Program** – The design has been completed and the City received no bids. As a result, the City should enter in to an Inter-local Agreement (ILA) with Bexar County to secure purchasing services from a County contractor to provide construction, enabling the City to take advantage of high volume, low price construction materials for street maintenance service for this project. In the Proposed FY 2020 Budget, \$400,000 is programmed for moving forward on the seal coat project. Other suburban Cities also take advantage of this ILA for purchasing with Bexar County. This will help facilitate the process since the County already selected the lowest bid. Once City Council reviews and approves the ILA, it will be considered for approval by Bexar County. The 2019 SMP for Seal Coat Projects includes, but not limited to approximately 29 different streets segments and 4 alleys for an approximate total length of 9.28 miles.
- **South Winston/West Castle** – Damages occurred at this intersection when a contractor for a utility company damaged new water main during a directional boring activity. This water main break caused massive damage to the new pavement and loss of pavement structure. As a result, the City placed a claim and received compensation from the insurance claim to repair the intersection. The design is complete; the City will get

three quotes and select a contractor for the necessary repairs. Project is expected to be completed by the end of October.

### Appreciation:

During the development of the FY 2020 Proposed Budget process, we must ensure we continue to maintain and provide excellent municipal services to citizens, businesses, and visitors while ensuring appropriate funding and tracking of all financial resources.

As is the case with most municipalities, personnel/ payroll costs encompass the largest single expense in a budget. Public safety requires round the clock staffing and specialized equipment which endures extensive wear and tear. The FY 2019 Adopted Budget covered core services such as Public Safety (Fire, Police and Dispatch), sanitation/streets within our Public Works, Municipal Court and Administration. The General Fund is the largest fund and accounts for the general service and operations of the City.

As I have mentioned previously, the City of Castle Hills has very good employees who are knowledgeable, talented and dedicated to their respected positions within the organization. As part of the FY 2020 Proposed Budget, another focus should involve the need to recruit and retain personnel for the City of Castle Hills. The City should factor the need to have a competitive salary and benefits which are consistent to surrounding cities in our area. The City of Castle Hills is fortunate and unique to have a dedicated public safety team which encompasses fire, police and dispatch. As part of this budget, we need to ensure we are addressing first responders needs in our organization and community.

Early in my tenure, I recognized the need to establish a leadership team to assist me and I did. Without these experts, I can't run this City effectively. Our department heads are the experts who manage their departments effectively and efficiently. The City has had turnover in certain departments but at the end of the day our City staff continues to do their jobs and do them well despite tumultuous times. I would like to say **thank you** to all our employees and appreciate all they do for the City and our organization on a daily basis.

Please contact me at rrapelye@castlehills-tx.gov or at the office at 210.293.9673 if you have any questions on projects or need assistance with services from the City of Castle Hills.

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# COUNCIL COMMENTS



**CLYDE R. McCORMICK**  
PLACE 1 (Holdover)

Isn't it funny how hard it is to rely on whatever a politician says? You know you can't trust government, don't you? Here is where the problem starts: According to Mr Jefferson, Governments are created among people to protect the lives and property of the governed. However, once a government has been created, whatever the creators thought, that is not the first goal. The first goal of government is to maintain continuity, to ensure that the government itself continues to exist. The government must defend its existence at all costs, lives and property of its people be damned. Our prime example is the civil war, in which some 750,000 of our citizens died, probable millions injured or maimed and untold loss and damage to crops, property and treasure on both sides. But the Union was preserved.

A similar phenomenon can be seen among politicians running for office, many with big hopes and progressive ideals for the benefit of the Country and the people. Once elected, however, these same idealistic candidates may become addicted to power or focused more on re-election and the enjoyment and exploitation of the privileges and perquisites of power and office, oftentimes to the exclusion of the ideals and goals they set out with.

Political parties grow from the tendency of folks to associate with like minded others to form groups and seek to advance their view or programs over those who might disagree. As the parties tend to become more rigid, having established "Platforms", independent thought and ideas become considered heretical and are punished by the party. Tolerance of other opinions becomes intolerable, and the "other" advocate attacked. As the parties become more powerful they tend to become power brokers, offering support and political rewards to those who best contribute to the strength and effectiveness of the party, and most effectively block and frustrate the other party. Loyalties become divided between patriotism, constituents

and Party. Think congressional "Caucuses". Eventually the parties devolve into tribalism, all those on the other side (either side) are thought to be evil. Instead of looking for the best for the country, Parties oppose each other and block each other's accomplishments at every opportunity. After all, you can't allow the other to get credit for anything good. We can't fill every position with the political hangers-on of either Party (always the Party in power, of course). We absolutely must find the best person we can for each job or appointment, regardless of "Party loyalty". We have lost the idea of the "loyal opposition" against whom we might polish our ideas and with whom we might explore alternatives and compromise to achieve a better outcome than either side might reach alone. What we need are independent thinkers who seek the best for our little city, without regard for the national political dysfunction or blind loyalty to Party or personalities.

Note that extreme positions are often wrong because they exclude their opposites. One need not be exclusively an advocate of new business, or exclusively an advocate of resident's rights. Our city needs both residents and business. The city must protect the rights of both! We need to preserve our strong residential character and to welcome new businesses that fit and enhance the character of our city. We should identify and seek those business outcomes. Since we are land locked by San Antonio, we have no place to grow. We need to look at alternatives to increase our business economic profile, improve the use of our limited land area and increase our population if we can. That means we guide our business and population growth so that Castle Hills continues to be the desirable, friendly and welcoming community it has been in the past. Civility and a collegial atmosphere in the City Council are hopeful first steps in that direction. Greater citizen involvement in a collegial atmosphere is essential. There is always hope for the future. Treat each other excellently!

I'd love to hear your thoughts.

Clyde R McCormick  
210-383-8941  
cmccor5683@aol.com



**AMY McLIN**  
PLACE 3 (Holdover)

There is a difference between a politician and a public servant. I ran for office both times on the platform that we can work together to make a difference in our small city, preserve our city services, and address street and drainage needs. I educated myself and was ridiculed for "wasting" tax payer money all for vanity. I have been called difficult because I call Council to task on following the law and our City Ordinances. I have a duty to abide by my oath of office and I have always represented the City of Castle Hills with a servant's heart, soul, and attitude. It has never been about having a title, power, or control.

It is no mistake that my name is not on the November ballot. I do not believe it is appropriate for me to run for office at this time given

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(Continued from page 6)

the unfortunate turn of events that Sylvia Gonzalez was not sworn in properly as Alderman Place 3. The Secretary of State's election office advised the City that since Ms. Gonzalez did not qualify to serve within 30 days of the May 4, 2019 election the seat was considered vacant. Since I was the last person to qualify to serve as Alderman Place 3, according to Article 16, Section 17(a) of the Texas Constitution, I am required to continue to perform the duties of office until my successor is duly qualified. I sit in this seat reluctantly since I did not win the May election. Given Mr. McCormick's resignation there are two vacancies on Council and we both hold over until a Special Election is held to fill our seats.

We must look forward to the future. What is your vision of Castle Hills 2051 - our Centennial as a City? I bet the vision is different for everyone, but we can all agree on having an independent city with the best services in the San Antonio metro area! If I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

## Code Compliance



### MOSQUITO PREVENTION

Just because it's after Labor Day does not mean that the threat of mosquitoes isn't still present. Mosquitos can breed well into November and in any source of water but prefer shallow areas of stagnant water. Some of these sources can include such easily overlooked items such as planter saucers, covers and tarps, kiddie pools, toys left idle for days and even indentation in yards that are prone to the collection of water. Swimming pools are a potential mosquito breeding ground, even if the pool is actively used in the summer and then become idle in the off-season. Pool covers are also a good source of breeding grounds for some mosquito populations. What can you do to reduce potential breeding grounds on your property? Get rid of old tires, bottles, jars and other containers. Empty wading pools weekly. Do not store them outside. Repair leaky pipes, outside faucets, and change the water in bird baths and vases or plant pots and their saucers at least twice a week. Use mosquito dunks in swimming pools you no longer use as they are still prone to collecting rain water. If you cannot afford to drain your pool in the proper, legal manner, consider adding small mosquito-eating fish to your green pool. We have all heard the news talk about the emergence of the EEE virus which is carried a certain type of mosquito. The best source of information dealing with this topic is the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/easternequineencephalitis/index.html>. While the best defense is always knowledge, minding one's backyards for secret mosquito cities isn't a bad second defense, either!



If you are new (*or not so new*) to Castle Hills...Welcome! The Castle Hills Woman's Club is beginning its 67th year and we are eagerly accepting new members. Our club is a multigenerational group of women who contribute their time and talents to civic, charitable, and social projects in the City. If you are interested or have any questions please email me and I would be happy to help you. Good Works, Good Friends, Good Times....The Castle Hills Woman's Club!

Judy Crawford, President  
Jcrawford4@satx.rr.com

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# What happens when I call 911 for a medical emergency in Castle Hills?



By Shery French – Castle Hills Woman's Club

## Is it faster to call the police/fire number? (210-342-2341)

Yes, probably. 911 is easy to recall, but will likely be re-routed and waste time.

A dispatch person will answer and ask:

- The nature of your emergency
- Your location. They and other responders know local landmarks, so mention a store or general area if you don't know an address. They can track your location, but that takes time.

We have six full time dispatchers (seven slots), and some part time as needed.

They are trained in triage and can handle multiple calls.

**Who are the responders?** Police and fire departments, with police usually arriving first as they are already deployed. Transport is provided by Acadian, a contracted ambulance service.

## What are they qualified to do?

All of our responders are trained in basic emergency care. Police and firemen carry and are trained to use heart monitoring and defibrillating equipment (AED...Automatic External Defibrillator), and one fireman is a paramedic who is trained in advanced life support.

## What is the average response time in Castle Hills?

Less than two minutes for police/fire; the national average is 8 minutes. Recently, the response time for the ambulance has also been good, according to Fire Chief Ladewig.

## Who transports?

The city contracts with Acadian, a nationally accredited service. Their ambulances carry paramedics and EMT's in mobile intensive-care units (MICU) including meds/IV's which may be given according to their protocol or medical order. They also have specialized vehicles for babies (Mobile NICU). They are employee-owned and have a full-time medical director.

**Will I get a bill?** Police and fire...no. Ambulance....yes.

## Do I have a choice about where to be taken?

Yes, although circumstances may intervene, such as the ER being full, or traffic problems. Your injury/illness may be better treated at a different hospital. Not all have a trauma unit, specialized stroke treatment, etc. Info. about levels of stroke care hospitals are at: dshs.texas.gov (updated Aug. 2019).

## If I don't have a plan, or am unable to say, where will I be taken?

The closest appropriate hospital, depending on the type of injury/illness.

## Is it faster/better to just drive myself or another person?

Sometimes it is a judgment call, but you can't help anybody if you are driving, and lifesaving treatment may be delayed. Driving yourself may take longer and endanger others.

## Plan Ahead

Know about your closest hospital or full-service ER and the best route there. Learn about your neighborhood and drugstore urgent care clinics. Most are for wellness checks, immunizations, and minor injuries/illnesses; they don't prescribe or dispense prescription pain meds.

## Keep in your wallet/handbag:

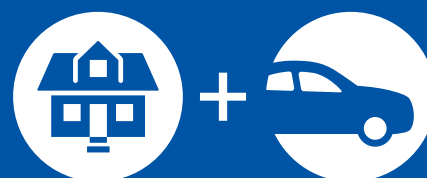
Photo ID, insurance cards, a list of current meds, physician name, and a brief history, such as recent surgery, diabetes, asthma, heart conditions, etc. Consider a Medical Power-of-Authority or Consent to Medical Treatment by a Non-Parent for children in your care (forms at [texaslawhelp.org](http://texaslawhelp.org)). A list of friends'/relatives' phone numbers in case you don't grab your phone. I keep a photo of these documents in my phone. Consider a "go bag" ready by the door for emergencies. (Chief Siemens suggests including a snack, and a friend takes makeup.... we all have priorities).

## Other things to think about:

1. Know where to find your phone, car keys, and wallet/handbag.
2. Make the address on your house stand out, day and night. Keep your gas tank at least half full.

Thanks to Police Chief Johnny Siemens, Lt. Wayne Waggoner, and Fire Chief Jim Ladewig for their generous interview time and expertise. And kudos to our dispatch people...according to Chief Siemens and Lt. Waggoner, they have multiple tasks and handle all at the same time, with grace. Denise Richter, Acadia Director of Marketing, was also very helpful. It is comforting to count on well trained people who will be there in a hurry when we need them. Sincere thanks to all of the above.

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# CITY SNAPSHOTS



**Ice Cream Social**



**Public Works**



**Fire Prevention Week**







## 2019 National Night Out

National Night Out is celebrated throughout America as an annual "Give Neighborhood Crime and Drugs a Going Away Party." Most of the United States celebrates this event on the first Tuesday in August but Texans celebrate on the first Tuesday in October. National Night Out is designed to:

- ▶ Heighten crime and drug prevention awareness.
- ▶ Generate support for local anti-crime efforts.
- ▶ Strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships.
- ▶ Send a message to criminals letting them know neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

On **Tuesday, October 1, 2019** residents are encouraged to lock their doors, turn on outside lights and spend the evening outside with neighbors. Neighbor knowing neighbor is one of the most effective ways to prevent crime. National Night Out celebrates our Police – Community Partnerships.

## Passports



The City of Castle Hills is now officially able to accept paperwork for U.S. passport applications at city hall. The passport application services are available on a walk-in basis:

- Monday: 8:30 am to 2 pm;
- Wednesday: 8:30 am to 4 pm;
- Friday: 10 am to 2 pm

Appointments are available for Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

To schedule an appointment call (210) 293-9674 or (210) 342-2341.

For more information regarding how to apply for or renew your passport, please visit the U.S. Department of State website at:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html>

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## 7 Simple Steps to a Successful Xeriscape

By: Derek Conner, SAWS Conservationist

Making the jump from a turf-blanketed landscape to a xeric one can be intimidating. It helps to think about the process in baby steps – and also about how much time, energy and water you'll save.

Although it seems like fall will never arrive, it is right around the corner – and so is planting season. So right now is the perfect time to rethink your landscape.

Xeriscapes are quickly becoming the norm in San Antonio, offering unique traits not found in ordinary landscapes. Contrary to popular belief, a xeriscape is not rocks and cacti. But it is a principle of landscaping that promotes water conservation.

There are seven simple steps to a successful xeriscape:

- **Planning** – Consider how will you use your landscape and what will it look like during each season of the year.
- **Soil** – Four to 6 inches of good soil is ideal, and using mostly organic material will help even more.
- **Plant selection** – Stick to native plants or ones well-suited for the surrounding area. (Don't forget about trees).



- **Turfgrass** – Ideally no more than one-third of your landscape should be grass, preferably a drought-tolerant one that requires less water.
- **Efficient irrigation** – Minimal irrigation is needed once landscape is established. Water by plant zone and utilize shady areas by watering less if system permits.
- **Mulch** – Apply it to retain moisture, cool root zone and reduce weeds.
- **Maintenance** – Replenish mulch once or twice a year, trim and prune plants as needed, and irrigate only as necessary.

Source: [www.gardenstylesanantonio.com](http://www.gardenstylesanantonio.com)



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# Carbon Monoxide Safety



Often called the invisible killer, carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel can be sources of carbon monoxide.

- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Choose a CO alarm that is listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- Call your local fire department's non-emergency number to find out what number to call if the CO alarm sounds.
- Test CO alarms at least once a month; replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the fire department.
- If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for. Call for help from a fresh air location and stay there until emergency personnel declare that it is safe to re-enter the home.
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow.
- During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.
- A generator should be used in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors and vent openings.
- Gas or charcoal grills can produce CO — only use outside.

## HOME HEATING EQUIPMENT



Have fuel-burning heating equipment and chimneys inspected by a professional every year before cold weather sets in. When using a fireplace, open the flue for adequate ventilation. Never use your oven to heat your home.

## FACTS

- ❗ A person can be poisoned by a small amount of CO over a longer period of time or by a large amount of CO over a shorter amount of time.
- ❗ In 2010, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 80,100 non-fire CO incidents in which carbon monoxide was found, or an average of nine calls per hour.



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# Halloween Word Search

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 D X W I T C H Y R A T E M E C S P B U V  
 F L O W E R E W G O O S E B U M P S Y S  
 Q Z S K E L T O N U Y H A H J V E M T U  
 J L I V E S I W Y N N E P A A K M R R M  
 V A S E R B A C A M R S W U U A A I J  
 L R U R E B O T C O V S W N M N P S C P  
 X X P G N A F Y K O O P S T G Q U E K C  
 S T E P H E N K I N G V J E Y T M M O A  
 O A R G R I M R E A P E R D W T P U R N  
 O E N L G U T S T E O T S H I V K T T D  
 B I A I E C T A R E H S L O Z T I S R Y  
 X S T V E R C I G I K B K U A H N O E C  
 P F U E B K P N N S E K W S R O S C A O  
 P Z R D C M A G S A W C G E D M E Y T R  
 E Z A A A R S U S E R A M T H G I N C N  
 Y D L V O R G T N I E T S N E K N A R F  
 Z B F U L L M O O N Z G R A V E Y A R D

BAT	JAWS
BEAST	MACABRE
BLACKCAT	MUMMY
BOO	NIGHTMARE
BROOMSTICK	OCTOBER
CANDYCORN	ORANGE
CEMETARY	PENNYWISE
COSTUMES	PUMPKINS
DEVIL	SAW
EVIL	SPOOKY
FANG	STEPHENKING
FRANKENSTEIN	STRANGERTHINGS
FULLMOON	SUPERNATURAL
GOOSEBUMPS	TRICKORTREAT
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