

October 2022



# *The Castle Hills Reporter*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Message from the Mayor.....p.2-3  
Message from the City Manager.....p.3-4  
FY 2023 Council Adopted Budget ..... p.5

City Council Comments .....p.6-8  
Emergency Preparedness.....p.9  
Halloween Fire Safety Tips ..... p.10  
Halloween Pet Safety Tips.....p.11  
Recipe: Pumpkin Lasagna.....p.11

A bi-monthly newsletter for the residents of the City of Castle Hills published by Neighborhood News, Inc.



# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



## Streets and Drainage

By now, you MIGHT be getting tired of reading about streets and drainage but everyone is appreciating the improvements. As you may remember, in 2020 we borrowed money to help finance the rebuilding of streets and addressing drainage issues. Since borrowing that money, we are about 90% done with the projects from the 2020 dollars. We are expecting to be completely done by December 2022. Our engineers tell us that we have done this surprisingly fast. From getting the projects documents, to bidding the project with multiple contractors, to starting the project. While construction projects can bring some headaches, the temporary inconvenience is worth having smooth roads and better drainage for years to come!

In the last Reporter, there was mention that the City is in the process of borrowing money to do another round of streets and drainage. For starters, all street and drainage projects have already been identified. There are approximately 4 drainage projects and 12 streets. In case you hadn't heard, the bids on the 2020 Projects came in lower than expected so we were able to do even more streets than we planned! The next round of streets and drainage will be the only Castle Hills item on the November ballot.

## Castle Hills Clean Up

Right behind Aggie Park is a large drainage ditch that had been victim to a great deal of graffiti. In talking to the City Manager, Public Works was understaffed and scheduled out for a good while taking care of other higher visibility projects. My comment to the City Manager "you get the paint and I'll do it!" True to his word, Mr. Rapelye and Mr. Harada secured the paint. One August Saturday afternoon the sun wasn't blaring quite as much as it is normally does and it seemed like a good time. A quick stop by my personal construction office to pick up a small power generator and paint spraying rig, prepared to tackle graffiti! The rest of Saturday afternoon was spent wiping out the graffiti in the ditch and the drainage tunnels.

After posting the picture to Facebook there were numerous comments from friends and residents pledging their support to do a City clean up. Now that seems like a GREAT idea. Moving forward, It is my hope that we took the necessary

*(Continued on page 3)*



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## CITY STAFF

**Ryan Rapelye**  
City Manager, (210) 293-9673

**Brenda Craig**  
Interim City Secretary  
(210) 293-9681

**Nora Davis**  
Finance, (210) 293-9674

**James "Jim" Ladewig**  
Fire Chief  
(210) 342-2341, ext. 217

**Steven Zuniga**  
Police 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  
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3rd Monday, 5:30pm  
Quarterly or as needed

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(Continued from page 2)

steps to prepare a City cleanup day, which was a successful event in early October. The plan was to meet at the Commons for coffee and treats and then everyone takes off to work in their areas of choice. Area school and church leaders assisted with their support to help in the respective areas around their campuses. The Castle Hills cleanup day had a big impact on our beautiful City.

### Buy Castle Hills

This month will mark a new regular feature to a Reporter article, "Buy Castle Hills". With the current economy and small businesses struggles, I wanted to make sure that we are doing our part to support Castle Hills businesses. With this feature I will be going out to learn about the business to tell the story of the business, including a picture or two of the goods or services of the business. The plan is to alternate between restaurants and other types of the business. You will also get the must haves from the business! If you or someone you know should be featured, please be sure to reach out!

First up is Guajillo's – The Shortcut to Mexico. What is great about Guajillo's is that it is a family-owned business but it hasn't always been called Guajillo's. In 1999 Carlos Barajas Sr (Left) had retired from the serving our country the U.S Army. At the time his brother Dianko Barajas (Right) was a Chef in Mexico City. They decided that they wanted to move to San Antonio and open a restaurant. Their first restaurant was Taco Inn, right off San Pedro. In 2001 they moved to their current "better" location at Blanco and 410. While Carlos Sr. and Dianko have both "officially" retired; the next generation has taken control. Carlos Jr. (Middle) (U.S. Coast Guard) and his sister Michelle (Right) are now the next generation.



If you haven't had a chance to try Guajillo's, it is a must. Be prepared, this is not your typical Tex-Mex food; which is why their tag-line is "The Shortcut to Mexico". My go to order at Guajillo's is their Fideo which is a tomato-based vermicelli soup as an appetizer and the Chicken Chilaquiles plate. Chilaquiles are a traditional Mexican breakfast with lightly fried corn tortillas pieces. It is usually accompanied with onions, queso fresco, and crema. Carlos Sr says that they can make their food with "corazon" (soul) and you can taste it!

Please consider stopping by and supporting local, Veteran-owned, and family-owned business. If there is a business in Castle Hills that you think should be featured, reach out and let me know. I look forward to seeing you all in the Commons for the Lighting of the Lights, Sunday December 4th at 4 PM.

If there is anything that I can do for you or your families, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Yours in service,

**JR Treviño, Mayor**

[JTrevino@castlehills-tx.gov](mailto:JTrevino@castlehills-tx.gov)

210-559-5940



## MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

By Ryan D. Rapelye, City Manager

### FY 2023 Adopted Budget and Capital Projects!

#### Process and Goals for the FY 2023 Budget

After two months and eight meetings, the FY 23 Budget has been adopted. Early on in the development process of the budget, City Council asked me to revisit the budget and find areas to reduce expenditures from the original proposed budget filed on August 9. As we began the process of preparing the proposed budget, City Council also requested that I review the budget with the goal of reducing the tax rate in order to provide some relief to residents in light of the recent increase in assessed property appraisals. This involved in depth review of various tax rates and the preparation of several budgets that each rate could support.

We needed to prepare a budget that was sufficient to provide for the general operations of the city in order to continue to maintain and provide excellent municipal services to citizens, businesses, and visitors. In addition to these requests, we also desired to incorporate a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for the employees to ensure that we are competitive in order to be able to recruit and retain employees. During the process of developing the FY 23 Proposed Budget, we strived to balance the need to identify funding for general operations and the need to mitigate the increased cost to residents due to increased assessed property values and the current economic climate related to rising costs.

As part of the process in the development of the proposed budget, City Council reviewed surrounding cities' compensation structures to ensure we are able to compete, especially in public safety, police and fire. After further examination, it was apparent that the City of Castle Hills was below average as it relates to the entry level base salary for our police patrol officers in comparison to other cities. As part of the FY 23 Adopted Budget, we were able to adjust the base salary in the police department budget in order to be competitive with other cities that are also recruiting police officers.

#### General Fund Highlights:

The Proposed General Fund budget is fiscally conservative and balanced. The General Fund is funded by property tax, sales tax and user fees and is balanced with expenditures and revenues at \$7,680,102.

The General Fund is the largest fund and provides for the general services and operations (police, permitting/planning, public works,

(Continued on page 4)



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(Continued from page 3)

and administration) of the city. All City employee salaries are funded out of the General Fund and The FY 23 Adopted Budget funds a 4% cost-of-living adjustment for employees. The budget does not include any additional personnel or increase in health care for City employees. General Fund revenue for the FY 23 Adopted Budget is programmed and established at reasonable levels, utilizing historical data and forecasted conservativity. We are optimistic in the growth of sales tax, commercial permitting, and the addition of new businesses to the community this year, and we hope this will continue into next year.

### Property Tax – Five Year Historical:

Below is a historical timeline as related to the property tax in Castle Hills. The FY 23 Adopted Budget is based on a tax rate of 0.508688, which brings us closer to the 2018 tax rate. In 2019, the original proposed tax rate was 0.501345; however, as a result of not having a quorum of council members at the council meeting in September 2019, a public hearing on the tax rate could not be held, and the City had to default to the no new revenue rate of 0.480619.



The current FY 23 Budget includes the adopted tax rate of \$.508688 which is a reduction of \$.02 cents from the FY 21 Adopted Tax Rate of \$.524899. This reduction in the tax rate will assist residents affected by the escalation in assessed values. The Average Taxable Homestead Value of \$357,199.00 last year has increased to \$391,801.00 this year. It should be noted that the increase in property tax does not affect properties that are frozen by the property tax "freeze" for homestead.

### American Rescue Plan Funds (ARPA):

In total, the City received \$1,100,000 in ARPA to be allocated over a two-year period. Last year, the City received its first ARPA allocation of \$550,000 which was programmed into the current FY 22 Adopted Budget. The City of Castle Hills utilized \$297,000 of these

funds toward one-time expenditures such as: replacing the City's aging IT infrastructure system, and replacement of the generator for City Hall and the Police Department. The City received the second half of the allocation of \$550,000 this year. The FY 23 Adopted Budget includes expenditures related to Phase III renovations of the Fire department building, procurement of equipment for Fire and Public Works Departments, and includes funding for an emergency management notification system. These items are all being accomplished using federal funds provided through ARPA and have no effect on local taxes.

### Capital Projects:

Over the last two budget cycles, our leadership has taken monumental steps to tackle long-term infrastructure needs by issuing the 2020 Certificates of Obligations (CO's) at a 1.4% interest rate with a AA rating in order to address streets and drainage infrastructure. Our Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) has been the planning tool to help guide us to select and prioritize past and future capital projects. The development of any capital plan requires vast engineering experience and input. As City Manager, I have worked diligently early in

my tenure at Castle Hills to help create and implement the CIP. I am not a professional engineer; however, based on my experience working in other cities, I know that in order for a CIP to be a productive and valuable tool for the city, it requires the expertise of engineers who are specialized in this field.

Team Castle Hills (City Council, City Manager, City staff and City engineers) has made major strides over the last three years in addressing Streets and Drainage. In October 2020, the City received the 2020 CO funding. Since then, the team has been able to plan, design, bid and construct fourteen streets and address

another major area which were prone to flooding – Banyan Phase II. In less than two years, these improvements have transformed Castle Hills for existing and new residents for many years to come. I am proud to be part of Team Castle Hills!

The FY 23 Adopted Budget includes funding for additional street maintenance next year. The City has also identified 12 streets for reconstruction (\$3M) and four drainage projects (\$3M) in different watersheds. Funding is required before these projects can proceed to construction.

### FY 2023 Budget:

The FY 2023 Adopted Budget maintains the core services such as Public Safety (Fire, Police and Dispatch), Public Works (sanitation/streets), Municipal Court and Administration. The City of Castle Hills is fortunate and unique to have a dedicated public safety team and this budget addresses the needs of our first responders. As City Manager, I will continue to recognize and applaud our employees. The City of Castle Hills is very fortunate to have such an outstanding team of employees who are knowledgeable, talented and dedicated to their City.

I wish to extend my appreciation to City Council for their contribution by attending our budget workshops, reviewing budget documents and providing guidance in development of this budget. I also want to express my appreciation to City Staff for their input and hard work in striving to maintain the highest level of service to the citizens and businesses of our community.

Please contact me at [rrapelye@castlehills-tx.gov](mailto: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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## FY 23 Council Adopted Budget Highlights

- The General Fund (day-to-day City operations) budget is funded by property tax, sales tax and user fees, the budget is balanced with expenditures/revenues at \$7,680,102.
- Total Budget Difference between FY 22 Adopted and Adopted FY 23 Budget is an increase of 2.8%.
- Includes adjustment to the base line salary for a patrol officers – expense of \$19,240. Current starting salary is \$47,895, beginning January 1, 2023, starting salary will be \$51,570.
- FY 23 Adopted Budget includes a \$36,500 decrease in expenditures from the City Manager FY 23 Proposed Budget.
- The FY 23 Adopted Budget includes a Tax Rate of \$.508688 which is a reduction of \$.02 cents from the FY 22 Adopted Budget's Tax Rate of \$.524899, this decrease assists residents due to the escalation in assessed values - Rate effects on Average Taxable Homestead Value \$357,199.00 from last year to \$391,801.00 this year - Note: This does not affect the 65 and over that are participating in the property tax "freeze" for homestead.
- FY 23 Adopted Budget does not include any additional personnel; Includes a 4% cost-of-living adjustment for employees and no increase to the current cost of Health Care for City employees.
- Through June 30, 2022 of the current FY 22 Adopted Budget, \$629,728 was a projection that represented un-expended expenditures in the total General Fund. This was not considered a surplus and mainly due to current vacancies at the time. A surplus would be identified once the FY 22 Audit is completed next year by the City Auditor. If a surplus is identified, any surplus would be transferred to the Supplemental Street and Drainage Fund, per Castle Hills Ordinance No. 1106.
- Captures a one-time cost from the American Rescue Plan Funds (ARPA) to provide funding for Phase III - Fire Department Renovations, one-time expenditures for the procurement of certain equipment for the Fire Department and Public Works, also includes an expenditure related to address Emergency Management needs, these expenditures total \$109K out of the ARPA Fund.
- FY 23 Adopted Budget includes a fund balance/reserve – Over six months, which protects the city from future uncertainties.
- Responsible stewardship of public dollars: Recently, the City's rating was affirmed at AA Bond Rating from S&P Global which translates in to maximizing taxpayer dollars by financing debt at a lower interest rate.
- FY 23 Adopted Budget includes funding for further street maintenance for next year in the amount of \$175,000.
- Capital Projects - FY Adopted Budget 23, City has identified 12 streets for reconstruction and 4 drainage projects – Street Reconstruction (\$3M) and Drainage Project (\$3M). Funding is required for these future projects.

## FY 23 Budget Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### How Is Tax Revenue Used by The City?

Quite simply, the revenue collected for the City of Castle Hills is used to provide City services within the General Fund for the City to functions and to pay City debt.

### What is "Ad Valorem?"

Ad valorem is Latin for "according to value," and is also a term used to describe property tax.

### How Is My Property Value Determined?

The Bexar County Appraisal District is responsible for determining the value of all real and business personal property within its jurisdiction. Property located in Bexar County; the Bexar County Appraisal District determines your property value. The appraisal district is an entity independent of the County and any other taxing jurisdictions. The appraisal district appraises property according to the Texas Property Tax Code and the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices (USPAP). The Bexar County Appraisal District then sends the certified appraisal values to each taxing unit and the Bexar County Tax Assessor-Collector which creates the tax rate calculations.

### How Is the City's Property Tax Rate Determined?

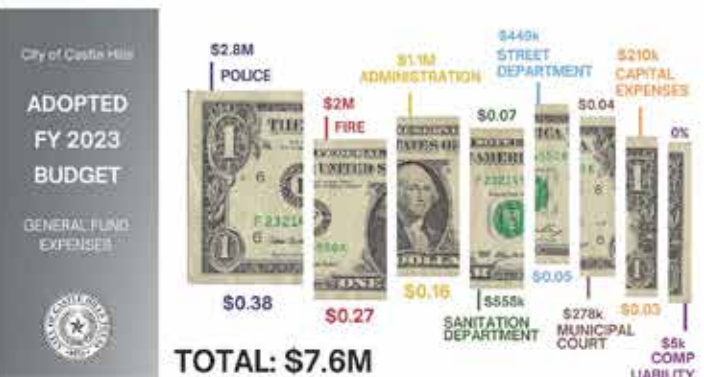
In keeping with our core values of fiscal responsibility and innovation, we run a lean machine in Castle Hills! Each year, our City Council look at the City's expenses, reviews the prior year's tax rate, examines ratified property values, sets a budget and determines the rate that will bring in the amount needed to cover those expenses.

### How Is Property Tax Collected?

Based on the property value appraisal provided by Bexar County Appraisal District, the County Tax Assessor-Collector collects your property taxes for the City, County, school district, and other taxing entities, then sends those tax dollars to each of these entities.

### What Is A Fiscal Year And When Does It Begin?

A Fiscal Year, commonly denoted "FY", is a 12-month period for taxing and/or accounting purposes. For the City of Castle Hills, the Fiscal Year begins January 1 and ends December 31 of each year.







## JOE IZBRAND

PLACE 1

Mayor Pro-Tem

Dear Neighbors,

The fall season is always a busy time in Castle Hills and a reminder of all the activities that take place in our city. This October alone, activities have included National Night Out, a citywide litter clean-up, our seasonal secure documents paper shredding event, the heavy trash/bulk items drop-off, Trunk-Or-Treat for Halloween in late October which includes a Concert in The Commons, and more. We live in a very active and engaged community.

This fall, our residents are also being asked to go to the polls on November 8th to vote on the city council's proposal to issue certificates of obligation to continue reconstruction and improvements to our city's streets and drainage systems.

If approved, this would be the second round of certificates of obligation that are being allocated for the work. The first round, issued by the council in 2019, enabled \$8 million in street and drainage improvements.

In 2018, just 22 percent of our streets were rated in 'good condition.' Today, because of funding from the first certificates of obligation, the development of a Capital Improvements Plan by the city manager and an annual street maintenance budget, more than 60 percent of our streets are rated in good condition. Major flooding that was a regular occurrence along Banyan Drive and adjoining streets has also been addressed through a nearly \$2 million reconstruction project.

The second round of certificates of obligation would focus on the reconstruction of 12 additional streets, along with four drainage projects in different watersheds within Castle Hills. The taxpayer impact would be approximately \$100 per year on the average value home in Castle Hills.

Please take the time to carefully consider the facts and vote in the November 8th city referendum.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your representative on city council. Let's stay in touch. You can reach me at facebook.com/izbrandplace1 or by email at [izbrandplace1@gmail.com](mailto:izbrandplace1@gmail.com).

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## KURT MAY

PLACE 3

### A Balanced Budget for Castle Hills' Bright Future

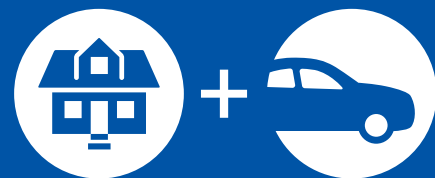
Your City Council has been fully immersed in the discussion and decision-making process for approving a balanced City budget for the coming year. The City Council has agreed on a balance budget that maintains our commitment to a strong police force, fire department, public works, as well strategic projects that allow for budgeted expenditures for improvements in quality of life. These improvements may range from improvements to existing parks, the creation of new recreational spaces, to infrastructure improvements that saves our city long-term in energy costs. It is also my hope that we can keep Castle Hills' tax rate low, compared to our neighboring city, without jeopardizing our future ability to budget necessary city services.

The City Council appreciates the comments and suggestions from Castle Hills residents. This continuing dialogue pushes forward common-sense solutions to existing challenges. It also results in creative, innovative ideas to plan for the Castle Hills of the future.

As I see our current needs and resources, it is imperative that we continue to focus on infrastructure projects to fix our roads and drainage issues. This is in alignment with the most consistent

*(Continued on page 7)*

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feedback I have received from residents in the last three years, while serving on the City Council.

As always, I welcome your input, ideas, suggestions, and participation. I love this City of ours that continues to dazzle me with its sense of community and promise.

#### Kurt May

Alderman, Place 3  
City of Castle Hills  
210-273-8134



**JACK JOYCE**  
PLACE 4

Friends and Neighbors,

As I write this article, the hot summer has wound down, the kids are back in school, and traffic has returned to normal. Fall and the holidays are around the corner!

With respect to City business, we have worked to close out this budget season, with important decisions about the budget and tax rate. We are counting on good attendance at the public hearings to learn what the citizens' priorities are. Here are my priorities during the budget season:

- Given the difficult financial environment we find ourselves in, with high inflation, high interest rates, and higher property valuations, I advocated for as low a property tax rate as we can manage. It is important to note that your total property taxes result from two things: the property valuation as determined by Bexar County, and the tax rate set by the City. The City can leave the tax rate the same as last year, and due to the increased valuations determined by Bexar County, citizens would still pay more in taxes. This situation is complicated by the freezing of taxes of those over 65 a few years ago, leaving a heavier tax burden on younger families and individuals.
- One of the unusual economic conditions we are now facing is a shortage of labor, and this is also true of municipal staff members. Other cities in our area are providing generous raises, cost-of-living (COLA) increases, and other incentives to keep their staff. We must respond to these realities in order to keep and properly reward our fine staff.
- The City is in receipt of the American Rescue Plan Fund monies, with approximately \$700,000 not yet officially earmarked. Fund priorities must be established this year, and all funds used by the summer of 2025. I would advocate that these funds be shared among stakeholders, i.e., use some for investment such as in solar panels or more efficient HVAC equipment in city facilities, or to assist with future planning; provide more amenities, such as has recently been studied in the Commons; use for staff needs, such as a possible salary stipend, or emergency equipment desired by the fire department.
- We still have approximately \$300,000 in the CIED fund, which can be used for items that would benefit the community. These funds might be a more appropriate use for the solar panels mentioned above. City Manager Rapelye has long advocated to take about \$30,000 from this fund to build a couple offices in our too-big Council Chambers, to help relieve staff space shortages.

The goal is to balance all the City's needs, made worse by inflationary and interest rate pressures, with our revenue, which now includes the extraordinary contribution from the federal government. I am confident your City Council will make the best decisions for all stakeholders. Please let me know what you think!

#### Jack Joyce

[jjoyce@castlehills-tx.gov](mailto:jjoyce@castlehills-tx.gov) • 210-827-7222



**BETH DAINES**  
PLACE 5

Dear Neighbors,

The pride the residents have for our Castle Hills community is evident in the community participation in Women's Club, Garden Club, and CHCO events. We want our city to be a beautiful and desirable place to live. City Council planned a City-Wide Clean Up event which took place on October 8. We had encouraged individuals, families, and organizations to help pick up trash on all our main thoroughfares.

I am so inspired by Mayor Trevino's personal efforts to keep our city a place of pride. In August, he spent a Saturday painting over graffiti in the ditch next to Aggie Park at 410 and West Avenue. Our Public Works department spends much time picking up trash and painting over graffiti as it gets reported. The through traffic on our major streets make this a huge undertaking. With the efforts of community volunteers, we can have a major impact in one day.

(Continued on page 8)



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During the August 31st Town Hall meeting hosted by the Parks and Recreation Committee, many residents voiced their desire for improvements to The Commons. The underlying preference was for a space that generations of residents could use to enjoy outdoor activities with family, friends and neighbors. Shade, benches and event space were prioritized. Our community is small and has the ability to get to know so many people. Coming together to help beautify our city is a wonderful opportunity to meet neighbors from all areas of Castle Hills.

I reached out to all the churches and schools in Castle Hills for participation in this clean-up event. It was a great way for students to earn community service hours. The city provided breakfast pastries and bottled water in The Commons as we met to pick up the supplied gloves and trash bags. Each group was given an area to clean up. Our Public Works department collected the bagged trash at the end of the day. This was a very successful event which helped to beautify the community, we hope to do another event in the near future, so be on the lookout for upcoming notifications on other community litter events.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you would like to get your organization involved, or if you have any ideas to improve future events within our community. Councilman Izbrand and Mayor Trevino post updates on their Facebook pages, and I encourage you to follow them on Facebook for news, events and discussions.

**Beth Daines**

[bdaines@castlehills-tx.gov](mailto:bdaines@castlehills-tx.gov) • 210-394-5752

*"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."*



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# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

It's that time of year when we see the hurricanes approaching the Texas Gulf Coast or the beginning of the cold fronts moving through Texas causing severe thunderstorms, high winds and possibly tornadoes. Don't forget the winter storms that may come later in the year. Disasters can strike at any time and being prepared is the key in getting through the event safely. In a major disaster, your first responders cannot reach everyone immediately. Help may not arrive for hours in a major incident so it is good for you to be prepared ahead of time.

Most disasters are natural disasters, the result of some force of nature, such as tornadoes, wildfires, hurricanes, and floods. Some natural disasters can be predicted, such as hurricanes and severe winter storms, while others, such as tornadoes and severe wind storms happen with little or no warning. Some disasters are the cause of human actions, intentional or unintentional. A disaster plan will help with safety, security, and comfort. Regardless of the type of disaster, there are things you can do to prepare.

## GENERAL PREPAREDNESS

Here are some tips in helping you to be better prepared in the event of a disaster.

- Discuss what to do in an evacuation, and don't forget to include the needs of those with disabilities. Check with your elderly or disabled neighbors to see if they will need extra assistance during a disaster.
- When advised by officials, go immediately to a shelter as instructed or to the home of a friend or relative who lives out of the area. Find out about your local shelters beforehand.
- Pre-establish several different routes in case certain roads are blocked or closed.
- Family members can become separated during an emergency. Be prepared by creating a plan for how to reach one another. Establish an out-of-area contact (such as a relative or friend) who can coordinate family members' locations and information should you become separated. Make sure children learn the phone numbers and addresses, and know the emergency plans.
- Quiz children every six months so they remember what to do, where to go, and whom to call in an emergency. Have the plans in writing so they are easily referenced available.
- Decide how to take care of pets. Pets may not be allowed in places where food is served, so you will need to have a place to



take your pets if they cannot go to a shelter. Pets are an important factor to plan for in case of an emergency. To many pet owners, their pets are part of the family and they will not want to be separated. Every effort will be made to accommodate your pets in case of a disaster.

- Have ample supplies of batteries, candles, bottled water and non-perishable food in case you should shelter in place.
- Possibly purchasing an emergency generator may be an option in preparing for extended power outages.
- Post emergency contact numbers in your phone (neighbors, family, etc.) as well as calling 911 if you need immediate assistance.
- There are many preparedness tips that you can find on-line or you can call your CASTLE Hills Fire Department and they can assist you as well.

*Fire Chief Jim Ladewig*



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# BE HALLOWEEN Safe

Halloween is a fun, and spooky, time of year for kids. Make trick-or-treating safe for your little monsters with a few easy safety tips.



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## HALLOWEEN FIRE SAFETY TIPS

- »» **When choosing a costume**, stay away from long trailing fabric. If your child is wearing a mask, make sure the eye holes are large enough so he or she can see out.
- »» **Provide children** with flashlights to carry for lighting or glow sticks as part of their costume.
- »» Dried flowers, cornstalks and crepe paper catch fire easily. **Keep all decorations** away from open flames and other heat sources like light bulbs and heaters.
- »» **Use a battery-operated** candle or glow-stick in jack-o-lanterns. If you use a real candle, use extreme caution. Make sure children are watched at all times when candles are lit. When lighting candles inside jack-o-lanterns, use long, fireplace-style matches or a utility lighter. Be sure to place lit pumpkins well away from anything that can burn and far enough out of the way of trick-or-treaters, doorsteps, walkways and yards.
- »» **Remember** to keep exits clear of decorations, so nothing blocks escape routes.
- »» **Make sure** all smoke alarms in the home are working.
- »» **Tell children** to stay away from open flames including jack-o-lanterns with candles in them. Be sure they know how to stop, drop and roll if their clothing catches fire. (Have them practice, stopping immediately, dropping to the ground, covering their face with hands, and rolling over and over to put the flames out.)

If your children are going to **Halloween parties** at others' homes, have them look for ways out of the home and plan how they would get out in an emergency.

### Did you know?



Decorations are the first thing to ignite in **900** reported home fires each year. Two of every five of these fires were started by a candle.

**For emergencies:**

Dial 9-1-1



**Your Source for SAFETY Information**

NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169



## Don't forget about your furry family member on Halloween!

Spooky strangers coming to the door. The doorbell! And look at all the treats! Halloween can be a fun holiday for all members of the family if you remember these suggestions:

- 1. The doorbell!** Every pet's clue that someone new to play with has arrived. With all the excitement in the air, and the doorbell ringing on-and-off for a few hours, pets can get very excited, or sometimes scared. Only you know your furry friend- will they be happier shut in the quiet bedroom? Or maybe, so they can at least see part of the action, you should sit outside to pass out the candy while they glance out the window. The last thing you want is for your excited pet to dash out the door!
- 2. Please do not leave your pet outside in the yard Halloween evening.** Strange costumes and noises can make the dark even more scary. In addition, well-meaning children in strange, spooky costumes may try to pet an already spooked dog – resulting in a not so fun evening for anyone, dog included.
- 3.** While we are on the subject of not leaving your pet outside Halloween evening, **PLEASE especially do not leave your pet free to roam.** Dogs and cats can get easily disoriented and frightened, plus all the added activity in the streets is not safe for them. (You also do not want your furry friend to end up with someone who may be more prone to playing “tricks” than giving treats.)
- 4. Chocolate Chocolate Chocolate!** Not even a little is OK for your pet...in fact, it is TOXIC! Please don't share, and put the treats in a cupboard or container out of their reach.

If you take your dog with you on your family's candy quest, be sure an adult holds the leash tight, and remember some children, and adults, are afraid of dogs...and please, ALWAYS pick up any “treats” your furry friend may leave in the neighbor's yard along the way.

**Happy  
Halloween!!**



## Pumpkin Lasagna

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 c. (1 stick) butter
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 tsp. cider vinegar
- 1 tsp. dried sage
- 3 (15-oz.) cans pumpkin purée
- 2 tbsp. maple syrup
- 1 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 (15-oz.) container ricotta cheese
- 3 c. shredded mozzarella, divided
- 3 c. shredded Fontina, divided
- 1 egg, beaten
- Cooking spray, for baking dish
- 1 box no-boil lasagna noodles



Source: Delish.com

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375°. In a saucepan over medium heat, melt butter. Add garlic and onion and cook until fragrant and soft, about 5 minutes. De-glaze pan with vinegar and cook until mostly evaporated, about 4 min. Stir in sage.
2. Add pumpkin, maple syrup, nutmeg and season with salt and pepper. Heat until warmed through, about 5 min.
3. In a medium bowl, stir together ricotta, 2 cups mozzarella, 2 cups Fontina, and egg until combined.
4. Grease a 9 x 13 baking dish with cooking spray. Smear a thin layer of pumpkin mixture on bottom of baking dish and cover mixture with noodles. Add a third of pumpkin mixture, followed by a third of cheese mixture. Repeat two more times, using all pumpkin and cheese. Top with a layer of noodles and sprinkle with remaining mozzarella and Fontina.
5. Bake lasagna, covered for 35 min. Uncover, heat oven to 400°, and cook until cheese on top has melted, about 15 min more.
6. Let rest for 5 minutes, then slice and serve.

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Halloween word search  
answers from page 8



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