

# Rockport Transcript

A PUBLICATION OF THE CITY OF ROCKPORT

## Signature Windswept Oaks to Remain for Future Generations

A special fund has been designated at Prosperity Bank to help with the purchase of the iconic windswept live oak and rookery property, located at the intersection of Business 35 and Maple. The fund was set up in a cooperative agreement with the City of Rockport and Aransas First, a 501(c) 3 organization dedicated to conserving land in Aransas County.

Interested parties may mail or drop off their donations at Prosperity Bank, located at 1501 Highway 35 N. The checks should be made payable to Aransas First with a notation of "Bent Oaks Conservancy" in the memo area

of the check. All donations are tax deductible. If mailing in a check, please add "Attn: Gloria" on the envelope.

The City of Rockport took a major step in preserving its natural resources and signature windswept oaks by signing a purchase agreement with the owners. The "Bent Oaks" property, which also fronts on Broadway, offers a panoramic view of Key Allegro and Little Bay. It has been owned by a long-time Rockport family for more than 60 years but whose members now live out of town.



Bent Oaks Conservancy, comprised of local residents and businesses, has partnered with Aransas First and the City to undertake the task of fundraising and has established a Facebook page. Individuals who wish to offer their time and talent toward generating donations and grants can find contact information and meeting dates on that site.

## How the City Works

There are over 150 full time and part-time individuals employed by the City, who are dedicated to serving the needs of residents. From public safety to street repair to utility management, their often invisible presence is essential to protecting and enhancing the welfare of our citizens and visitors. As part of this continuing series, we'll visit with different departments and citizen advisory committees to get a better understanding of their contributions to



the City.

This issue focuses on the City Secretary's office, one of the oldest public servant roles in municipal government and was known

as "keeper of the Archives" prior to Biblical times. While today's City Secretary still manages and maintains archives, the position involves numerous responsibilities that are critical to the operation of the City.

The City Secretary is an officer of the City, appointed by the Mayor and City Council. It is a statutory position required by State law and the City Charter. In addition to the statutory duties of the position, the City Secretary

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# How the City Works

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serves to enhance public participation in municipal government and safeguard the democratic government process through transparent open government and records.

In Rockport, the City Secretary's office is often the initial contact for callers and visitors. The Department supports the City Council meetings, through dissemination of agendas, packets and minutes, and acts as a resource for the public seeking information regarding official city policies, laws, actions and records.

Staff is responsible for updating and maintaining the City Charter, Proclamations and Resolutions, Code of Ordinances and Council Policies, as well as publishing all official notices, overseeing bidding and Request for Proposal processes, and the oversight of all public records and artifacts. Additional duties



specific to our City include Human Resources, HOT Fund Management, Election supervision and coordination with appointed citizen advisory boards.

*Rockport is in the process of purchasing two CNG trolleys. One will be a back-up and the other will work in conjunction with the current Fulton trolley. The route will be expanded to include key destinations and hotels in Rockport. The purchase will be made through the City's Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds.*

# Budget Message

*(The following is an excerpt from the City Manager's comments on the 2015-2016 budget, which commenced October 1. The full message and a copy of the budget are available for review through the "Financial Transparency" icon on the City's web site. )*

The desire of city councils to maintain the lowest ad valorem tax rate possible is understandable and important for attracting residents and businesses to have a tax rate and services that are competitive with other communities. The City of Rockport has attempted to do this for several years prior to FY 2012- 2013 by maintaining the effective tax rate (i.e. the rate that raises the same amount of revenue) and cutting expenses; however, creating an artificially low tax rate by deferring maintenance and/or failing to plan for known future expenses is not successful in the long-term and usually creates a more painful fiscal environment for the future. Fortunately, over the years the City of Rockport has recognized the need to reinvest in its infrastructure continually and, beginning in FY 2012-2013 and lasting through FY 2015- 2016, has adopted tax rates that are higher than the effective rate in order to position the City for the future.

The new ad valorem tax rate of \$0.364858 has a net result on a median residential property of

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## PD in the Forefront of Technology

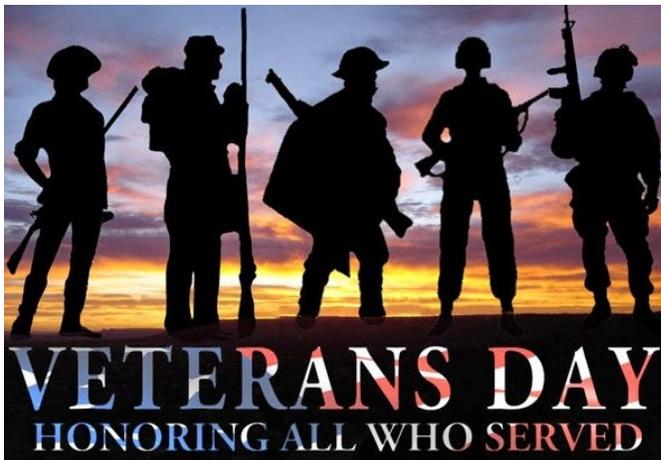


There are been numerous stories in the national news about engagement situations where the videos taken on the scene were from onlookers and not officers. While many law enforcement agencies throughout the country are just now considering audio or video recording officer contact with the public, the Rockport

Police department has been doing this as a matter of practice for more than two decades.

It began with video dash cams and microphone recordings for all patrol officers. In 2007, the PD moved to body cams for all police/citizen encounters. Much of the cost for purchasing this equipment came from grants and the 100 Club.

Just recently, the cameras were upgraded and additional components were added to the PD's servers, which increased memory from 9 terabytes to over 156 terabytes of space to allow for a longer retention of videos.



In honor of those who have served in the United States Armed Forces, a special Veterans Day Service will be held on Wednesday, November 11, 2015, at 11:00 a.m. at Veterans Memorial Park on Austin Street. The event is free and open to the public.

The ceremony will include the presentation and posting of the colors by the ACISD Navy Junior ROTC, recognition of local veterans' organizations and law enforcement agencies, laying of the wreath and dedication, and a musical presentation by the Rockport-Fulton High School Band. Sergeant Major Steven D. Odom will serve as the guest speaker .

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increasing its taxes by \$57.38. Last year's rate was \$ 0.335179.

There are several issues with revenue and expense impacts that bear consideration in the near future. These include investment in information technology, employee retention, water consumption and drought, shore stabilization and street maintenance and reconstruction.

Despite the improved economy, the proposed FY 2015-2016 budget is conservative in its revenue estimates and expenditures. The budget maintains a high level of reserves in order to mitigate the risks posed by Rockport's somewhat limited economy, modest scale, reliance on tourism, and threat of strong storms.

In 2015, the City's conservative fiscal policies and budgeting resulted in Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's both reaffirming the City's 2013 rating increase from AA- to AA with a stable outlook, recognizing the City's healthy financial flexibility.

The complete budget, as well as a wealth of other financial data, is available by clicking the "Financial Transparency" icon on the City's web site.

**Shop Rockport—  
Keep your retail sales taxes  
working at home**

# Rockport City Council

Mayor



C.J. Wax

Ward 1



Rusty Day

Ward 2



J.D. Villa

Ward 3



Pat Rios

Ward 4



Barbara Gurtner

## Save the Date—December 5



This year's Tropical Christmas promises to bring even more fun and activity, including the return engagement of "Cast in Bronze," the illuminated night parade and spectacular fireworks display. Information on participation and events are available on the City's web site.

## Who Do I Call If ...

Emergency	911
Non-Emergency Public Safety	729-1111
Utility Bill Questions/Concerns	729-2213 x 234
Street Issues and Repairs	790-1160
Sewer, Water and Gas Issues	790-1160
Trash Pick-Up	729-2213 x 234
City Administrative Offices	729-2213 x 221
Building and Development Dept.	790-1125
County Mosquito Hotline	727- 0606 x 29

For additional questions or concerns, visit the "FAQs" or "Fix It" sections on the City's web site ([www.cityofrockport.com](http://www.cityofrockport.com)) or call City Hall at 729-2213.

## Didja' Know?

Since the implementation of water restrictions in 2011, there has been a significant reduction in consumption. According to research maintained by the City, average usage across the City's 7,684 residential customers has dropped from 113 gallons per day in 2011 to 91 gallons in 2014. Data for the first eight months of 2015 show the downward trend continuing.

We appreciate your efforts in conserving water use and following the restrictions for lawn watering between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.



622 E. Market Street  
 Rockport, Texas 78382  
 Phone: (361)729-2213  
[www.cityofrockport.com](http://www.cityofrockport.com)