

Mayor's Perspective



By Susan Narvaiz
Mayor of San Marcos

During the 2006-2007 budget cycle your city council voted to direct city staff to move forward with long overdue renovations at city hall. The departments that received a face lift were the city administration, legal, computer room, council/mayor and city clerk offices. This past week the council chambers received updated carpet and public seating which followed the purchase of new dais chairs during 2005-2006. We still need to modify the dais for adaptation to the use of laptops during council meetings and will consider this during our planning for the 2008-2009 budget discussions. We invite you to stop in and see the changes that will increase efficiencies and utilize the same amount of space to better serve our customers.

Railroad overpass

We also began planning for the opening of the Yarrington Railroad Overpass which we have slated for Saturday, March 29. As we get closer to the event and more details become available we will extend an invitation for the public to join the city council as we celebrate the second railroad overpass completed in the past two years. It took more than a decade to get the first one done and a little over a year to make this one happen thanks to a wonderful public/private partnership with Carma Texas!

CAPCOG update

Wednesday was my first meeting as the chair of CAPCOG and the gavel was passed from the outgoing Chair Commissioner Maurice Pitts. Thank you to the entire membership for your vote of confidence in me and I look forward to serving the 10-county region. One item that we received information on was the formation of an Emergency Telecommunications/Dispatcher Class that will train qualified candidates to increase the pool of workers that are skilled and ready to go in a role that can make the difference in emergency and life-threatening situations. I was impressed with the curriculum that the COG staff has put together and the classes are open to citizens that may have interest in making a career change and have never been in this line of work. For information, call CAPCOG at (512) 916-6000.

Aquifer meeting

This past Thursday San Marcos hosted the Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program (EARIP) meeting at the Dunbar Community Center and I was honored to welcome the group to San Marcos and to this very important session. The EARIP group was the result of the work by our state senators and representatives and their passage of Senate Bill 3 (SB3) during the last legislative session. Their scope of work is to take on the task of preserving our natural resources and en-

dangered species while developing strategies that will balance the needs of endangered species with overall use of water and the availability of supply in our region. The process will seek agreements by the end of 2009 and a habitat conservation plan by 2012 and federal, state and other funding to implement the plan. There were over 75 participants and in attendance and the city of San Marcos and Texas State University staff was there to make sure our interests remained in the forefront as the process begins to get underway. There is much hard work ahead for this group, but I am confident that a fair outcome can be attained. I will update you periodically on the progress of this work group. I extend my thanks to city staff and Dianne Wassenich who kept the coffee brewing and offered the great hospitality that San Marcos is known for. Well done!

Last Wednesday brought the welcoming of four new firefighters to the San Marcos Fire Department. They and their families were on hand for their official beginning of a bright career of service and the short ceremony was followed by fellowship with SMFD members.

Boards, commissions

This coming Thursday, Jan. 17 we will hold our annual Board and Commission Reception honoring outgoing and incoming appointees to the various boards and commissions that help to support the city council. This gathering is open to the public with a special invitation to all those that currently serve on our different boards or commissions. The ceremony begins at 5:30 p.m. at the Activity Center with New Member Orientation starting right after the swearing in ceremonies. The City Council initiated this event to show our appreciation to citizens that give of their time and talent to help the community. It follows our annual appointment process that begins in November with a council workshop and formal appointments made in December. This year we made changes to the form used when applying for positions and are still working on making sure that citizens can access the information needed to participate can be found at our city Web site with ease. Based on feedback we have received we will be refining how staff informs current board members of their term expiration and steps to be considered for reappointment to a particular board. I can still remember my first appointment to a city board many years ago. I knew what an honor and privilege it was just to be considered by the council at the time and was willing to serve. I hope that each of you have the same positive experience that I had as a past Economic Development and Convention and Visitors Bureau appointee. Even through there were some challenges they were small compared to the relationships formed and the