



# The City of Lucas Newsletter

November 2015

665 Country Club Road - Lucas Texas - 75002 • 972.727.8999 • www.lucastexas.us



## ***A Letter to Lucas Water Customers from Mayor Jim Olk***

The City of Lucas is proud to be your retail water provider. As background, the City actually purchases water from the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD) who is a wholesale water provider to about 33 cities and local utility districts. The City of Lucas owns, constructs, and maintains the entire infrastructure in the City that delivers the water to you. This operation is separate and apart from the City's general operating budget. The "Water Fund" is designed to pay for the cost of the water and the infrastructure based on the fees it collects from retail sales.

In 2010, the City began a program to replace all of our water meters with new remote read meters with the intent to improve efficiencies in the program. The newer meters have a device (a register) that sends a signal to a properly equipped City truck. As they drive by the property, the meter reading is captured electronically and downloaded into the billing system. This eliminates data entry errors and reduces labor costs because the employee does not have to get out of the truck at each house and manually read the meter.

In October 2014, the City began noticing that some of the registers (the part of the meter that sends data to the City truck) were not reading the amount of water that was being delivered. After an extensive review it was determined that 35% of the registers were not reading correctly. Having lost confidence in the initial registers, the City decided to replace the faulty registers with more accurate ones. The City negotiated a contract to replace 2,000 registers with a new contractor. However, between October 2014 and June 2015, the City estimated water consumption on about 800 customers' water bills. This was done without notifying those customers that they were receiving an estimated bill and that we were having issues with getting an accurate water consumption reading. Our billing system does not have the ability to note on a customer's bill that it is being estimated. As the Mayor, I sincerely apologize that we failed to communicate with our customers on these issues and I believe that we have learned a valuable lesson in transparency and communication.

With the installation of the new registers we are able to provide a more detailed and accurate report on water consumption down to an hour by hour basis giving us a better picture of customer water usage. The replacement of the registers has not been without some complications. So far we have found that the contractor had mis-programmed about 20 of the new registers so that they were reading seven gallons when only five gallons was actually delivered. In the cases where customers have contacted the City about their bill, we have worked through the issues to see if we have a programming problem, a mechanical problem, or if the usage is correct. We have three basic steps that we start with in the field.

- Chart the account to look at hourly consumption and consumption trends
- Inspect the register to ensure it has been properly programmed and is functioning properly
- Perform a "bucket test" where we compare the water flow to the register reading
- If we find that it is a programming or mechanical problem we credit the account.

When we find that it is actually increased water consumption, we work with the property owner showing them when and where the water is being used. We have found that many homeowners went from watering their yards from twice per month during the water restrictions to watering eight times per month when the restrictions were lifted, sometimes without reducing the duration of the watering. This can lead to very large usage numbers. This is reflected in our wholesale purchase of water, as the City had to purchase 214% more water than it had to during the periods where watering restrictions were in place.

During the recent months the City waived any late penalty associated with the July 15 to August 15 and August 15 to September 24 billing cycle to give the City ample time to resolve any concerns. We have even brought in temporary help to assist with answering your incoming calls.

I know that the call volume has increased and customer's frustration is being tested but the City of Lucas strives to deliver exceptional customer service and embraces the fair and equitable treatment of all of its customers. We are working diligently to ensure a reliable and equitable water system.

Should you have any further questions or concerns regarding your water consumption, please do not hesitate to contact any of the following staff members:

Utility Billing Coordinator Delta Moody	972-912-1205	dmoody@lucastexas.us
Development Services Director Joe Hilbourn	972-912-1207	jhilbourn@lucastexas.us
Purchasing Coordinator Linezka Maduro	972-912-1203	lmaduro@lucastexas.us
Finance Director Liz Exum	972-912-1201	lexum@lucastexas.us
City Manager Joni Clarke	972-912-1212	jclarke@lucastexas.us

Thank you for your support and patience as we work through this.

## Meeting Reminders for November

Date	Time	Description	Notes
Nov 5	7:00 pm	City Council	City Hall
Nov 12	7:00 pm	Planning & Zoning	City Hall
Nov 19	7:00 pm	City Council	City Hall
Nov 24	7:00 pm	Parks & Open Space Board	City Hall
Nov 26-27		City Hall Closed	Thanksgiving

## City Council Action Highlights

- The Parks and Open Space Board was acknowledged for their efforts in obtaining the Keep Texas Beautiful affiliation.
- The City of Lucas Finance Department was presented the 2014 Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award from the Government Finance Officers Association.
- The City Council appointed Lee Bauer, retired Lucas volunteer firefighter to be the Grand Marshal for the 2015 Founders Day Parade.
- The City Council approved four Service Tree nominations that will be presented to the recipients on Founders Day, October 24. Service Tree Award Recipients are:
  - FIRST CITY COUNCIL OF LUCAS - Mayor Gene Biggs, Town Secretary and Treasurer O.E. Spurgin, Constable Dale Spurgin, Joe Siler H.E. Moore, Sr., and Kenneth Lewis for their contributions to the City of Lucas.
  - REBECCA MARK for her outstanding community service and commitment to the City of Lucas.
  - CHARLIE GAINES for the quality of life he has given to the City of Lucas through the preservation of the Trinity Trail, and his many years of service to the community and City.
  - SUZANNE CHRISTIAN CALTON and SHIRLEY BIGGS PARKER for preserving the history of the Lucas community through the Lucas Community School book.

## NOVEMBER

**Nov 1** — Daylight Savings Time Ends

**Nov 3** — Election Day

**Nov 11** — Veterans Day

**Nov 26** — Thanksgiving Day



## Protecting Your Right To Privacy

You should have received a Confidentiality Authorization Form with your most recent utility bill. In order for the City to keep your information private, please complete the form and return it to City Hall as soon as possible.

## Election Day is November 3

While the City of Lucas does not have any items on the ballot for this upcoming November election, as a convenience for our residents, the Collin County Elections office will be using the Lucas Community Center as a voting location for Collin County November elections.

Early voting for November elections begins October 19th, however, due to the City's Founders Day event on October 24th and the preparation, traffic and parking associated with that event, early voting will only occur at the Lucas Community Center for one week, October 26 through October 30 from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. On Election Day, November 3, voting will also be available at the Lucas Community Center from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

You may vote at any Collin County location during early voting. To see all the voting locations, follow this link. [http://www.collincountytx.gov/elections/election\\_information/Pages/early\\_voting\\_locations.aspx](http://www.collincountytx.gov/elections/election_information/Pages/early_voting_locations.aspx).

## Parking at Lovejoy High School

As the popularity of the Lovejoy Leopards football team grows, so does the number of fans coming to the high school to cheer them on to VICTORY! More fans translates into more traffic near the stadium, and cars parking at the stadium. In response to concerns for school staff, citizens, and city officials, the City Engineer has been visiting the Leopards' home games to observe traffic to improve mobility and pedestrian safety by looking to improve the interaction between the school driveways and Estates Parkway. On October 15, 2015, City Engineer Stanton Foerster delivered his third a presentation with recommendations to the Lucas City Council regarding parking at the high school.

During the November 9 game, Lovejoy ISD allowed parking north of the stadium in the grass area and added law enforcement to direct traffic. These two measures eliminated all the safety issue observed by the engineer. The City Council encouraged the Lovejoy ISD to continue these measures and has asked the City Manager to bring a "no parking and towing along Estates Parkway" ordinance to the City Council for consideration in a future meeting.



## Daylight Savings Time Ends November 1

It's that time again—time to turn your clocks back one hour. As a reminder, it's also a good time to change the batteries in your smoke detectors.

## **Happy Thanksgiving - God Blessed Texas and Lucas Too**

In a 1789 proclamation, President George Washington called on the people of the United States to acknowledge God for affording them “an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness” by observing a day of thanksgiving. Devoting a day to “public thanksgiving and prayer,” as Washington called it, became a yearly tradition in many communities.

As we continue with the tradition today, our Thanksgiving festivities include watching football, eating a delicious meal with the family, and even some shopping. But what if we just take a moment to reflect on our many blessings?

The artist Little Texas sang their hit “God Blessed Texas” with such passion. You remember some of the chorus don’t you?

*“Cause God blessed Texas with His own hand  
Brought down angels from the Promised Land  
He gave them a place where they could dance  
If you wanna see Heaven, brother, here's your chance  
I've been sent to spread the message - God blessed Texas”*

Doesn’t our own beautiful slice of Texas come to mind when we think about this song? Lucas is a community that is a blessing to our many residents who call it home. With Thanksgiving upon us, let us reflect on the many things to be thankful for including natural beauty, great schools, and wonderful people. We are thankful for our warm and inviting community where neighbors still help neighbors, and we can still enjoy the stars at night.

## **Giving Truly is The Best Part of The Season!**

This year, the City of Lucas is proud to offer you two different opportunities to help those in need over the holiday season. You can choose to adopt a Lucas Senior Angel, or you can choose to provide food or toys for Family Promise of Collin County. Both drives will run from November 23 through December 11, and all donations are sincerely appreciated.

The **Senior Angel Tree** is a wonderful way to spread Christmas cheer to those in our community by providing gifts to individuals at our 2 local assisted living homes: The Agape and Loving Care. You can adopt your Senior Angel at City Hall, and return your unwrapped gifts to the same location. Santa Joe and his elves will deliver the gifts the following week.

**Family Promise of Collin County, Inc.** is the local affiliate of a national organization that has helped families in need since 1986. We will be accepting *non-perishable food items and/or new, unwrapped toys* at City Hall to support this organization. Other needs for Family Promise of Collin County can be found at: [www. http://familypromiseofcollincounty.org/wish-list/](http://familypromiseofcollincounty.org/wish-list/)

## **Coming Soon — Website Redesign**

In November we will be rolling out a fresh new look for our City website. The layout will incorporate the latest design features with a strong emphasis on mobile and touchscreen capabilities. Additionally, City staff has been working to bring the most requested content within “single click” reach. We’re all excited about the changes so keep your computers, iPad’s, and mobile phones ready.

## **How You Can Help Keep Lucas Beautiful**

The City of Lucas is a rural community with large lots and wide open spaces. This year, Lucas was awarded affiliate membership status in Keep Texas Beautiful. We could use the help of our citizens to help keep Lucas a city we can all be proud of. The City has an ordinance requiring homeowners to maintain their landscape to the edge of the pavement adjacent to their properties.

### **ARTICLE 8.01 GENERAL PROVISIONS\***

#### **Sec. 8.01.001 Obstructions in right-of-way**

##### **(a) Duty of abutting property owners.**

*All owners of real property abutting a public street or roadway within the city shall keep all rights-of-way or easements along, adjacent or contiguous to the public street or roadway clear of all obstructions that are a hazard to the operation of a motor vehicle or to pedestrians, including but not limited to weeds, tall grass, trees, shrubs or other vegetation more than eighteen (18) inches in height.*

Please help maintain the right-of-ways by mowing the sections adjacent to your property. In doing so, you will be not only be improving the look of your own property, you will be helping to keep Lucas a more beautiful and attractive place to live.

## **Join Us for a Country Christmas in Lucas**

You are invited to participate in our first “Country Christmas” celebration on Friday, December 4th at 7:00 pm in the Community Park next to City Hall. Mayor Olk will light our beautiful new Christmas tree to officially start the holiday season in Lucas. We will sing Christmas carols, and enjoy some hot chocolate while we all wait for our special guest to arrive on his red sleigh. Bring the family and enjoy an evening with your neighbors as we all celebrate the many blessings associated with being part of the Lucas Community.





## ***Fire Station Grand Opening and Open House Highlights***



The City of Lucas held the Grand Opening Celebration and Open House for the new addition to the Frank H. Hamlin Fire Station on Sunday, October 4, 2015. Approximately 200 guests attended the event including citizens of Lucas, Mayor Jim Olk, City Council, local City and County dignitaries, area business representatives, and current and retired fire rescue members. The Grand Opening ceremony included an honor guard pipe and drum band, the Pledge of Allegiance, the National Anthem, and a blessing of the fire station. City Manager Joni Clarke and Chief Kitchens welcomed the guests and expressed their thanks and appreciation to all those involved in making the

new addition to the fire station possible. In honor of the station's addition, a representative from U.S. Congressman Sam Johnson's office presented Chief Kitchens with a letter of congratulations, and a U.S. flag that was flown over the United States Capitol. In lieu of a ribbon cutting, Mayor Jim Olk and former Mayor Rebecca Mark uncoupled a fire hose as the ceremonial opening of the facility. After the ceremony, guests were invited to tour the facility, enjoy refreshments, and participate in the open house activities.

A HUGE thank you to all that helped in the preparation of the event.



CITY OF LUCAS  
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PRESORTED STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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POSTAL PATRON