

What's Going On?

March 2004

A Report to the Honorable Mayor and City Council

City of College Station and Ciudad Real Sign Partnership Agreement

A delegation from Ciudad Real in Spain arrived March 24th to begin a five-day visit in College Station, as the two cities officially marked the beginning of an exchange program that will touch education, economics, transportation and the arts.

Following months of correspondence and conversations, College Station Mayor Ron Silvia wel-

comed the delegation Thursday morning at the Hilton Hotel.

Tours of different facilities; meetings with university, government and business leaders; and participation in the Brazos Valley International Festival were all on the agenda.

“With the International Festival staged throughout most of their visit, activities in the community will definitely reflect the Spanish influence,” said Mayor Silvia. Highlights included the opening of the Don Quixote exhibit at the Stark Gallery at Texas A & M University, an occasion elevated in importance by the fact only two cities in the United States – New York City and College Station – were selected to showcase this exhibit. A concert featuring Spanish music by the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra was scheduled for Friday at 8 p.m. in the Bryan Civic Auditorium. It was sponsored by the City of Bryan and there was no charge for admission.

Saturday’s schedule included the official signing of a formal partnership agreement between the two cities at a luncheon hosted by College Station at the P. David Romei Arts Center. An original painting created by local artist Benjamin Knox to commemorate the occasion was be presented.

Following a wine tasting in the Rotunda of the George Bush Presi-



The College Station City Council and the Ciudad Real delegation.



Councilmember Maloney gives the delegation a copy of the Benjamin Knox Anniversary print.

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dential Library and Museum, the Ambassador’s Ball, sponsored by the Brazos Valley Arts Council, took the spotlight Saturday night. A joint proclamation from the City of College Station, City of Bryan and Brazos County was be presented that evening. Home to a major university, Ciudad Real is located 90 miles from Madrid in the heart of the Don Quixote region of Spain.

Delegates from Spain included Francisco Gil-Ortega Rincon, Mayor of Ciudad Real; Gabriel Miguel Mayor, First Lieutenant Mayor; Jose Ignacio Albentosa, Vice Rector of University Extension; Marcelo Valiente, Chamber of Commerce; Augustin Miranda Sotillos, National Association of Young Farmers; Felix Valdes, Minister Counselor of the Embassy of Spain; and Julio Montesinos, General Consul of Spain in Houston.

City Sponsors Third Regional Transportation Summit

The third annual Regional Transportation Summit is scheduled for April 22-23, 2004 at the George Bush Presidential Conference Center. The purpose of this regional summit is to explore transportation issues impacting not only College Station but the surrounding cities and counties. This year's summit will feature a number of speakers that are experts on transportation related issues from both state and national levels.



The City of College Station's Council members will serve as moderators for each lecture. Topics for discussion include: High Speed Rail: The Need in Texas; Highway Challenges of the Brazos Valley; High Speed Rail: The Technology of Tomorrow-Today; Development of Regional Mobility Authorities; Trans Texas Corridor and Toll Roads in Texas; Public Transportation in the Brazos Valley. Also included as part of the summit is the Brazos Valley Transportation Roundtable, BVTS Reception, and the Closing Congressional General Session.

This year's Regional Transportation Summit is sponsored by the City of College Station, the Texas High Speed Rail and Transportation Corporation, Texas Transportation Institute, the Brazos Valley Council of

Governments, Othon, Brazos Transit, Epsilon, Freese and Nichols, M&M Engineering, and LJA Engineering and Surveying, Inc.

Persons interested in attending this year's summit should contact Ken Fogle at 764-3570. Onsite registration will also be available at the George Bush Presidential Conference Center on April 22, 2004. Anyone with an interest in regional transportation is encourage to attend.



Starlight Music Series Slated for Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheater

The third Starlight Music Series, a free concert series sponsored by College Station Utilities, will be kicked off on April 17th.

This year's concert lineup includes some big names like Jerry Jeff Walker, Cowboy Mouth, Eddy Raven and Michael Martin Murphy. The lineup also includes Starlight favorites like Big

Otis. The 2004 Starlight Music Series lineup includes:

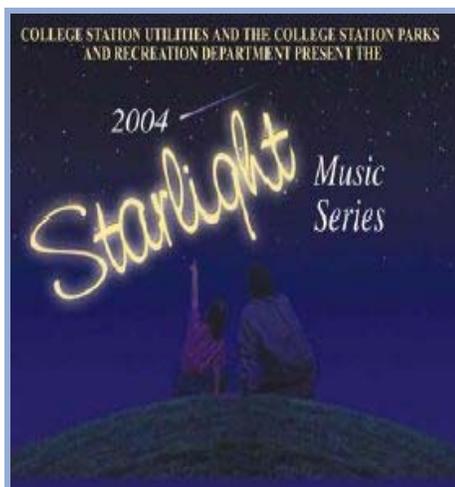
- *April 17th Jerry Jeff and Django Walker*
- *April 24th Bruce Robinson and Kelly Willis*
- *April 25th Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra*
- *May 1st Billy Joe Shaver*
- *May 9th Cowboy Mouth*
- *May 15th Michael Martin Murphy*
- *May 22nd Stratter*
- *June 5th Hanna's Reef June*
- *June 12th Big Otis*
- *June 19th Doyle Bramhall*
- *June 26th Eddy Raven*
- *July 10th Dave Matthews Cover Band*

Gates open at 6:30 p.m. and families are encouraged to bring picnic baskets or coolers. Last year's concert



series brought more than 40,000 people to the Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheater. This year's concert series is expected to draw an even bigger crowd.

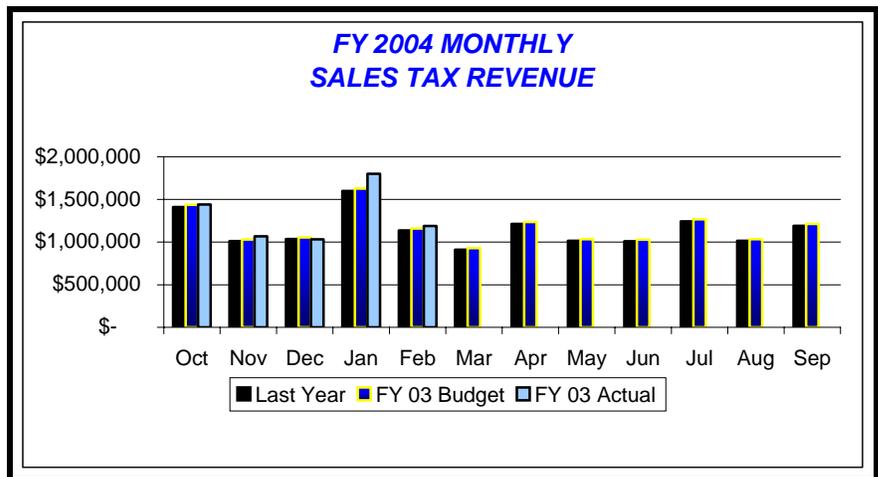
For more information, call (979) 764-3486 or visit www.cstx.gov.



Sales Tax Receipts Exceed Expectations

The City collected **\$1,187,811.96** for the month of February; this is a **4.51%** increase in the same month last year. The February receipts are for sales that occurred in January. Sales tax collections for FY 04 YTD are **\$6,527,322.14** or **5.46%** above FY 03 collections.

Sales tax receipts have increased by 3.50% when comparing the last 12 months to the previous 12 months. Overall, state tax receipts have increased in the last several months. Sales tax is projected to grow 2% in FY 04.



Educating for the Future

With the success of City Education Day in December, came the next phase of educating our area high school students about local government.

Approximately 230 A&M Consolidated High School students listened to lectures and received tours of City facilities on March 22 and 23, 2004. On the 22nd, several city representatives from various departments, including Development Services, and the City Manager's Office spent the day at the High School and spoke to the students during their government

classes. This day long event included discussion of the Council / Manager form of government, a simulation of a planning and zoning commission meeting, and general questions and answers intended to inform the students about various aspects of local government.

The second day involved tours of City facilities. The tours, intended to educate about vast array of services provided to the citizens as well as possible career opportunities, included a visit to Fire Station #2, the Police Department, Public Works,

Utilities Service Center, The Parks Department at the EXIT Teen Center and the Rock Prairie Road Landfill.

The purpose of the two day event was to introduce high school juniors and seniors to local government in a fashion similar to the highly successful Citizen's University for adults. The day was considered a success by many and will likely continue to be a part of the curriculum at the High School.

Planet Earth Celebration Set for April 24, 2004

The 9th Annual Planet Earth Celebration will be held on Saturday, April 24, 2004, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Sue Haswell Park. This event will focus on water conservation, waste reduction, energy conservation, recycling, water quality, and composting. There will be music, games, free refreshments and giveaways. This year, the first 500

people to arrive for the festivities will receive a free Planet Earth mug. This year's event is sponsored by the City of College Station and City of Bryan's Energy, Solid Waste, and Water Services Departments. The Brazos Valley Solid Waste Management Agency, Keep Brazos Beautiful and Texas A&M University Physical Plant are also sponsors.



Greens Prairie Road Widening

The widening of Greens Prairie Road began in early November of 2003. This project will convert Greens Prairie Road to a four lane urban section with sidewalks and a median in center of roadway from Highway 6 east to Lick Creek Bridge. The median will be landscaped similar to the medians recently completed on George Bush Drive.

On August 11, 2003 the City Council unanimously approved the construction contract for this project. The contract was awarded to Young Contractors, Inc. The award of the contract was based on the low bid of \$2,739,445.30.

The Greens Prairie Road project is behind a few weeks because of a long rainy season. The construction should be completed in December 2004. As of March 25, 2004 construction was 40% complete and the contractors had constructed 50% of the new double concrete lanes to the north of existing Greens Prairie Road. According to the City's project manager, Craig Jordan, "The contractor (Young Construction) is doing a good job and there has been no significant problems with con-



Greens Prairie Road Widening Project as of March 30, 2004.



Southside Traffic Calming Construction Begins

Construction of the Southside Traffic Calming Project began on February 23, 2004. This project is intended to slow traffic in this area.

On May 22, 2003, Council approved the Southside Traffic Calming Plan. Texcon was awarded with the \$93,033 bid. In 2001, Dexter Drive was selected as the first traffic calming project under the Traffic Calming Policy approved by Council in December 2000. The study area was expanded beyond Dexter to include other parallel street in the Southside Neighborhood area. A committee of eleven citizens worked with Traffic Engineer Dale Picha to develop a traffic-calming plan and presented the plan to the neighborhood at two public meetings in 2003. Every resident of the study area had the opportunity to vote on the project. Approximately 60 percent of

the households (326 households) participated in the vote, and approximately 68 percent approved the traffic-calming project. Staff has design plans and construction of the components to the adopted traffic-calming plan, which included:

- ***Lane-Narrowing Median***
- ***Curb Extension***
- ***Landscape Enhancement***
- ***Centerline Pavement Stripes and Reflective Buttons***

The total construction time for the Southside Traffic Calming is approximately four months. The construction was approximately 25% complete as of March 20th. The contractor (Texcon) is on schedule. The traffic calming items appear to be slowing traffic immediately after construction.

This project for traffic calming improvements to be constructed in the Southside area of College Station involves the area bordered by

the following streets; George Bush Drive, Dexter Drive, Holleman Drive and Fairview Street.



Construction on Dexter Drive

SHINING MOMENTS

City of College Station

1101 Texas Avenue
College Station, TX 77845
Email: cmo@cstx.gov



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- *Marc Hamlin, the Brazos County District Clerk, thanked **Parking Supervisor Rod Cashaw** for his professionalism, “In our day-to-day lives it is such a good feeling to find someone that truly enjoys being a public servant. Mr. Cashaw is definitely an attribute to the City of College Station.”*
- ***Senior Officer Joseph Benningfield, Sergeant John Campbell, Master Officer Brandy Norris and Liza Phillips, Senior Officer Noe Rincones, Senior Officer Ken Smith and Lieutenant Larry Johnson** were thanked by Steven Blumenthal, for their protection and professionalism at a recent luncheon at the College Station Hilton, “they were certainly congenial, alert and professional.”*
- ***Police Officer Karla Wiesepape** was thanked for her customer service and work ethic by Lieutenant Mark Langwell. Langwell reports, “The other day I got a phone message from a lady who spoke with Karla about helping her daughter with a school project. The lady was amazed that Karla agreed to go to the 3rd grader’s classroom and show the kids a ballistic vest as part of the girl’s project. Although this only took about 10-15 minutes, I am sure that it will leaving a lasting impression with the little girl and her family. Customer service seems to be a work ethic that Karla has taken to heart. I appreciate the work that she does.”*
- ***Senior Officer Joseph Benningfield**, was thanked by a parent for his competency and professionalism when dealing with an accident. “My daughter, a student at Texas A&M , was involved in a motor accident...Officer Benningfield displayed extreme competency and professionalism while carrying out his duties. His presence made an extremely difficult situation for my family much more bearable.” The parent also thanked **Records Technicians Martha Hennessey and Ted Thompson** for being “pleasant and helpful as well as quite courteous.”*
- ***Building Official Lance Simms** was praised by Chappell Hill Construction Company. In a letter to the Mayor, the President of Chappell Hill Construction Company wrote, “...my company has had several dealings with Mr. Simms. In every one of these instances he was extremely helpful and went the extra distance to make something work...Lance saw the need that the project has and helped us expedite it. Lance did not give us any shortcuts or favors. What he gave us was more important; it was expertise and courtesy, which was appreciated by all.”*
- ***Police Officers Matthew Joseph and Ryan Kelley, and Senior Officer Brent Abbey** were thanked by a parent for their kindness. “We just wanted to say thank you to several of your officers who were kind enough to show our three-year-old son (and his two-year-old brother) their police car. Several weeks ago, we went to the Sam's Club store and there were two police cars outside with their lights flashing. Our three-year-old son, Benji, was just delighted. Inside, we saw three officers who were talking to several people inside the store. Before we could stop him, Benji ran up to them and informed them that their police cars were “so cool!” Although we tried to tell Benji that they were busy, two of the officers very kindly took him and his little brother Bo out to see the cars. Benji has been talking about turning on the lights and seeing Daddy on TV (your video camera) ever since. He plays this game with his police cars and we have had to buy him several toy police cars since!”*
- ***Assistant Parks Director Ric Ploeger, Recreation Supervisor Jana Wood, and Vera Solis** received a thank you letter from the 2004 Junior Leadership Brazos Class: “Thank you very much for speaking to the 2004 Junior Leadership Brazos class on February 23, 2004. We really appreciate your support of our program and enjoyed the program very much. We are truly grateful for citizens and businesses willing to make investments in youth and to make the Junior Leadership Brazos program successful.”*