



January 2016

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**CHARACTER TRAIT
of the Month**

Loyalty

Establish personal and career relationships and select causes based on positive ethical principles that can remain true.

Smithville Area Chamber of

Commerce

100 NW 1st Street
P.O. Box 716
Smithville TX 78957

chamber@smithvilletx.org
512-237-2313

Check out your Community Calendar at www.smithvilletx.org

NEWSLETTER

Smithville Area Chamber Of Commerce

A Message from the Chamber Desk

By April Daniels

What an amazing 2015 we had! As we head into the New Year, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on where we've been. We started out the year with new leadership here at the Chamber. You have all been very supportive as I have navigated my way through my first year on the job.

We began with the Awards Banquet, honoring Sam Martin as our Citizen of the Year along with Brookshire Brothers and Born Again Emporium as business and organization of the year. We followed that with Thunder on the Colorado, our Jamboree Arts & Crafts Fair, our information candidate forum and our 19th Annual Casino Night. The Fall saw our annual Membership luncheon with Rep. John Cyrier as our speaker, leading into City Wide Garage Sale, Texas Photo Fest and Folk Music Fest. In November we hosted Airing of the Quilts for the first time as a Chamber event with hundreds of enthusiastic quilt lovers in attendance. Finally, our 25th Annual Festival of Lights saw record crowds and thousands of visitors. Along with these events we've hosted mixers, ribbon cuttings and welcomed many new members to the Chamber.

In the office, we have expanded our membership benefits to include group advertising projects such as our recent postcard that went out to all of 78957 and we're currently working on advertising that will go into the Lost Pines 8 movie theater and be seen before every movie for a full year. Our social media presence has expanded to cover tens of

thousands of views, comments, tweets and shares, drawing valuable attention to Smithville. We will be adding a second City Wide Garage Sale in March this year and the Chamber will begin sponsoring Trades Days. This year we will also be publishing our updated Membership Directory. As we prepare for our 2016 Awards Banquet, be sure to send us your Citizen of the Year nominations.

We are unveiling a new program through our newly formed Education Committee, chaired by Chamber Board member and SISD employee Ana Murray. The *We Support SISD* program is our chance to say thank you to the employees of our school district. From the teachers who instruct our kids to the administrators that manager the district to all of the myriad support staff workers that keep SISD running, we want to show our gratitude. Member businesses will visit campuses with us, give out snacks or gifts and show our appreciation for a job well done. Your \$50 investment will help fund the program as well as our new Smithville Area Chamber of Commerce Scholarship program. If you are interested in this program or would like to participate, contact us at the Chamber office, 512-237-2313.

Finally, though we were sad to see Kathy Lynch retire and leave us, we are happy to welcome Susan Curry as our new PR & Communications/Office Manager. So happy to have Susan on board!

From the Chamber office and Chamber Board of Directors, we wish you a wonderful, blessed New Year.

-April Daniels,
april.daniels@smithvilletx.org

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

This Month's Chamber Events

Friday, Jan. 1
**Chamber Office Closed for
New Year's**

Wednesday, Jan. 6
11:45 a.m. – Back Door Café
**Community Host/
Ambassador Luncheon**

Saturday, Jan. 9
9 a.m. – Chamber office
Gingerbread Men Put to Bed

Wednesday, Jan. 13
11:45 a.m. - La Cabana
Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, Jan. 21
5:00 p.m.–Smithville Heritage
Society
Chamber Mixer

Wednesday, Jan. 27
6:30 p.m. – La Cabana
**Thunder on the Colorado
Committee Meeting**

Thursday, Jan. 28
6 p.m. – First National Bank
community room – **Smithville
Business Association
meeting**

Saturday, Jan. 30
9:00 a.m. – First National Bank
community room
Chamber Board Retreat

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**2015 CITIZEN OF THE
YEAR NOMINATION
FORMS DUE BY
FRIDAY, JANUARY 29TH**
(NOMINATION FORM ENCLOSED)

Annual Chamber Banquet

It is never too early to start thinking about our yearly chamber banquet. This year, the banquet will be on Saturday, February 27. The highlights of the night are the announcement of the Citizen of the Year, the Business of the Year, the Organization of the year, and the Artist of the Year.

If your business or organization would like to sponsor a table contact the Chamber office at 512-237-2313 or fill out the sponsorship form included with this newsletter.

The sponsorships available are:

- **\$100 for the buffet table**
- **\$250 for the beverage table**
- **\$300 for a banquet table
(includes 10 tickets)**
- **\$750 for the entertainment
(includes 10 tickets)**

Each of these sponsorships includes your company's name prominently displayed on the sponsored table or entertainment area; your company's name displayed on a wall-sized donor list; verbal recognition for your company throughout the evening and in the event program; Acknowledgement for your company in both the Chamber newsletter and e-blast and social media as well as in the Chamber Chatter column in The Smithville Times

Individual tickets are \$30 each. More information about the menu, entertainment, and speaker will be available in next month's newsletter.

**SPONSORSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES**



THE BOOK CORNER Bookmark Your Calendar

By Judy Bergeron

Can it already be 2016? Here is what's happening at the Smithville Public Library this month. Read on, and bookmark your calendar for the following events this month:

I guess the New Year also brings a new Tax Season – bummer! That's when we take down the Christmas tree and bring in the tax forms.... In an attempt to encourage folks to e-file, the IRS has significantly cut back on the paper forms that they allow us to distribute to the public. We will, however, have many of the basic forms and instructions for anyone still looking for them. Of course, we also have plenty of computers that you may use for filing activities. If you prefer to use your own laptop or tablet, we have free wireless, so come on down!

Except, of course, if we are doing our inventory.... We will close for a week over the MLK, Jr. holiday weekend to do another inventory of all materials in the library. January 14 through Jan 20, our doors may be locked, but we'll be in here working! We will re-open on Thursday, January 21 at 10 a.m. for regular library business and hours. If you think that you might like to get in behind the scenes and help us with this project, please give us a call and we'll share some details with you!

Calling all local artists! If there are any artists (whether performing artists, musicians, visual, literary, or any other category that I missed) who are interested in sharing stories with a Smithville ISD high school or junior high school student – we want you. As

part of our Loleta D. Fyan grant programming, we would like to capture the voices of artists and art students as together they share their artistic interests and influences. Call the library and share your story today!

VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH

The Volunteers of the month are all the dedicated Chamber members, directors and volunteers that helped make the 2015 Festival of Lights such a success. So much work goes on behind the scenes to make this event happen. Thank you!



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Recently there has been an up-rise in scams, especially designed and targeted toward law abiding people. They usually come in the form of a phone call or e-mail and they purport that the person receiving the dialogue has done something illegal. The scammer then attempts to have the person "pay" to rectify the illegal act they allegedly committed.

The top two current scams are as follows:

1. The victim is contacted via phone and are told that they have outstanding IRS debit and they must pay the debt settlement or face prosecution, bank account seizure, etc. The scammer offers the solution that if money is sent via Western Union, Green dot debit card, etc. then the debt will be settled;
2. The victim is contacted and the scammer actually poses as a Law Enforcement official,

usually stating they are a ranking officer within a semi local police agency. They are then told they need to pay via Western Union or prepaid debit card or face arrest.

There are many scams similar to these and everyone should be aware and mindful of this. If you are contacted by ANYONE stating that you owe money and need to pay them, please do not do so. Research the allegation by asking specific information such as what the agency or government entity they are with and ask for a call back number. Research the information yourself and contact your local law enforcement agency with the information. Get names and as many specifics you can about the caller such as name, rank, employee number, etc. Also ask who their supervisor is and what issuing court the alleged offense if filed with. Get the court's information during your own research and contact that court directly, not with information the scammer has provided you with but with your own phone number/address information.

These scammers are currently using VOIP/internet programs to "spoo" the call, making it appear that the call is more legitimate by coming from a local number.

The main point is to remind everyone that these scams come in many variations but the end result is always the same. The scammer wants money from you in some form, usually an untraceable avenue. A little known fact is that a great deal of these scams occur overseas and are out of reach of local law enforcement and normally do not reach the threshold to be followed up on by any federal agency with jurisdiction to work in other countries so the victim most of the

time is at a loss with no change of monetary recovery.

If you think you are being targeted, please contact our office and we will help you with the situation as necessary.

Thank You to New & Renewing Members

New Members

Karyn Duty, Scentsy Representative
 Tim & Jackie Yancey
 Smithville Stitchers Quilt Guild
 Maurice Cook, Attorney at Law

Renewing Members

Nancy Catherman
 Jack & Lodie Marie Massey
 Robert & Tracy Fajkus
 Centex Image Design
 Joyce Klutts
 Family Crisis Center
 Comet Cleaners
 Bluebonnet Electric Coop.
 Grover & Sue Shade
 First National Bank
 Tom & Judy Bettes
 Texas Country Title Co.
 Grace Lutheran Church
 Robert & Miriam Vaughn

Commented [DA1]:

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 If you would like to become a Chamber member contact us at 512-237-2313 for an application form or visit www.smithvillex.org.

DOUG'S
PLUMBING CO.
 "Honest, Friendly, Reliable Service"

P.O. Box 1025
 Bastrop, Texas 78602
 DougThePlumber1@gmail.com

512-629-7408
 Doug Berryann
 M36441



CITY NOTES

From Robert Tamble,
Smithville City Manager

City Council Approves Smart Electric Meter Opt-Out Program

Beginning in January 2016, the City of Smithville will be upgrading its utility meter infrastructure and billing system. All water meters and analog electric meters will be replaced with digital Smart Meters that transmit usage/consumption data to a local server (area receiver) once a day. Given citizen's concerns, the City decided to offer a Smart Electric Meter Opt-Out program. Residential utility customers may choose between a Smart Meter and an analog electric meter. There is a one-time analog meter test fee and a set-up charge (\$75) to transfer/create an analog billing account. All analog meters must be tested. Analog meters that are found to be inaccurate must be replaced and/or refurbished. In addition, a monthly fee (\$10) will be charged to each opt-out customer to cover the additional operational and administrative cost of manually reading analog meters and inputting data. Only City of Smithville residential utility customers of record (i.e., the person whose name is on the bill) are eligible to participate in the Smart Meter electric meter opt-out program. Change of home ownership, failure to maintain current bill, or termination of lease agreement will negate the Smart Meter opt-out option. There is no opt-out option available for smart water meters. Residential customers who wish to participate in the Smart Electric Meter opt-out program must meet eligibility requirements above and enroll in the program. Smart Electric

Meter opt-out forms are available at City Hall (317 Main Street/Smithville, TX) or on the City website. Customers will need to provide their name, service address, and account number. Customers who make two (2) late payments in any 12-month period after enrolling in the opt-out will become ineligible for the program. A customer's participation in the opt-out program will be revoked if there is evidence that the customer has tampered or interfered with the operation of the analog meter. The deadline to enroll in the opt-out program will coincide with meter installation by Zone. All opt-out requests must be submitted by June 1, 2016. Residential utility customers can switch from analog back to a smart electric meter at no charge. For additional information (e.g., fees, installation zones, opt-out deadlines, and opt-out application form) go to <https://www.ci.smithville.tx.us/> or call the City Utility Department on 512-237-3282.

Character Poster Sponsors Needed

Smithville is a City of Character. The response to being a sponsor of one of the character months has been great. This program has been in existence since 2006 and would not be possible without the participating businesses.

We are looking for sponsors for the Smithville City of Character Posters for the 2016 year.

If you would like to sponsor a month, please contact Evelyn Weilert at Bastrop County Character Education, 512-303-3689. The cost to sponsor the poster is only \$100.

THE CHAMBER WORKS!

January Community Happenings

- 1 Chamber Office Closed
- 1 New Year's Day Hikes, Bastrop State Park
- 4 Emancipet at REC Ctr.
- 5 Blood Drive at Rec. Ctr.
Born Again Emporium sponsor
- 9 Hand Gun Carry Class at Smithville P.D.
- 9 Smithville Genealogy Society mtg. at Library
- 14 Community Gardens mtg. at Rec. Ctr.
- 18 Chamber Office Closed
- 21 Chamber Mixer, hosted by Smithville Heritage Society
- 26 Spoken Word mtg., 301 Burleson

2nd Tuesday – Music Tuesday at Block 16 aka Central School
Every Saturday – Live Music at Olde World Bakery
Every Week – Huebel's has Texas Hold 'Em, karaoke, pool tournaments and free pool
Every Week – The Front Room Wine Bar has ladies night & drink specials

CHAMBER BOARD

Welcome new Chamber Board members Debbie Denny of Debbie Denny Media Solutions and John Chabot of John Chabot "The Caterer!"

100 PERCENT. NOTHING LESS.



Real Estate Team

Gwendolyn 512-332-6070
BROKER

Tylene 512-581-8067
REALTOR

TotallyHookedRealEstateTeam.com