

THE

FRONT PORCH News



News and Information from the City of Bulverde and our Neighbors
Issue 2★ January / February 2014

THE
FRONT PORCH
News

CITY OF BULVERDE
ALL DEPARTMENTS
(COUNCIL, ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC WORKS, POLICE, ETC.)

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Bill Krawietz, MAYOR **Kirk Harrison**, COUNCIL

Rob Hurst, MAYOR PRO TEM **Gene Hartman**, COUNCIL

Yvonne Chapman, COUNCIL **Ray Jeffrey**, COUNCIL

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COMMISSIONER, PCT 1
830-221-1101

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PCT 2
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Mayor's Point

We are all aware of the gridlock that results when those in government can't agree on what direction to take. On the other end of the spectrum though, the possibilities are endless when people can work together to achieve a goal or objective.

There is quite a diverse background among the members of the Bulverde City Council. One would think that the result would lead to varying opinions, but it really doesn't. We currently have the most focused and unified City Council in the history of Bulverde. Not one member displays a single sign of selfishness, and they are unified to the greater good for the community as a whole.

This common front has resulted in the passing of Resolution No. 203. The resolution adopts a set of goals and near-term action items for the City. It also calls for the Council to measure progress of those goals from year to year. The resolution document can be found on the City's website at http://www.ci.bulverde.tx.us/users/0010/docs/203_001.pdf

First on the list of goals is to plan for the orderly and managed development of Bulverde and the surrounding area. This entails that we engage with the local emergency districts in planning efforts, evaluate the feasibility of a regional interconnected wastewater treatment system, evaluate initiating a Master Storm Water Management Plan to leverage available State and Federal grant monies and facilitate a revised Interlocal Agreement with Comal County regarding

the regulation of subdivisions in the City's extra territorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

The second goal is to enhance the vibrancy of the downtown Bulverde area (commonly known as Bulverde Village). This includes evaluating the feasibility of future investments, both private and public, and their compatibility with current zoning classifications, reviewing available Code Enforcement mechanisms to enhance the image of the Village area, and to engage Comal County in creating a plan for the future use and possible joint use of governmental facilities.

The third goal is to promote transportation improvements and greater mobility throughout the City and region. To accomplish this, we will develop a Master Mobility and Thoroughfare Plan that will include an emphasis on multi-modal roadway safety, work with TxDOT on improvements to US 281 and Hwy 46, work on strategies to acquire right-of-way easements, and to improve speed limit awareness on City roadways.

The fourth goal is to enhance parks and recreation opportunities. Just because we now have a wonderful new City Park in Bulverde doesn't mean we have satisfied this goal. Our objective is to complete a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, look at efforts for enhancements to other community parks in the City, engage with community volunteers and organizations to provide more formalized assistance with long-standing community events that promote community spirit (Bulverde Jubilee, Christmas Lighting, etc.), promote sponsorship of park amenities, create a Bulverde community garden and evaluate

strategic property acquisitions for future park projects.

The fifth goal is to facilitate better communication, marketing, and branding of the City in the community, and region. This newsletter and the registering of the trademark for the term "Front Porch of the Texas Hill Country" is a great start on this effort to build our identity. Other efforts will include enhancements to the City's website, establishing a social media presence, enhancing City entrance features along transportation corridors, recognizing community volunteers and partners, and creating a community calendar.

The last goal listed in the resolution is to ensure a continued strong customer service orientation for all City services. An organization is only as good as its people, so we need to ensure that the City recruits and retains high quality employees by remaining competitive in compensation. We also need to continue to invest in City personnel by providing leadership development and customer service training opportunities. It is not our intent to have all that talent simply confined within the walls of City Hall, so they are encouraged to continue to get out and get involved in the community.

This is an aggressive set of goals we have set for ourselves. I am happy to say that since the resolution was passed back in August of 2013 we have already accomplished or made substantial progress on achieving many them. It just makes things so much easier when we work as a team.

Bill Krawietz

Mayor of Bulverde, TX



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On the Cover

An introduction to our cover photographer , Michelle Grizzell

Our cover this month features the beautiful photography of local photographer Michelle Grizzell and the historic and lovely tableau of the Piepers' Settlement, the first home built in Bulverde.

Michelle Grizzell first picked up a camera to document her son's life. She immediately fell in love with photography and began studying to learn everything she could about the art. Together with her husband, she founded Seize the Light Photography in the north San Antonio and Bulverde area. She is a member of the Professional Photographers of America. Since 2011, Michelle has been involved with the Bulverde Area Humane Society, creating pet portraits of animals looking for their forever homes. As a result of her involvement, she's adopted two dogs from BAHS and she regularly writes about the misadventures of Carley the exuberant Lab in her blog *It's a Dog's Life*.

The Settlement (Piepers' Settlement) has a long and storied history of being Bulverde's first settled home. The Settlement is now operated by Don Strange of Texas and offers an exclusive venue for weddings and other special occasions and corporate events.



Getting to Know: Nolan Byrd



- by Gary Haecker, Bulverde Police Department Chief of Police

In December, Bulverde Police Officer Nolan Byrd was recognized by the Bulverde Spring Branch Area Chamber of Commerce as the Bulverde Police Departments Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Every year the Chamber contacts the Bulverde Police Department and the Comal County Sheriff's Department and requests a nominee for the award. Currently the police department employs 15 individuals with 14 of those being full time peace officers. There are many excellent officers currently serving the Bulverde community, so asking to recognize just one can be a difficult task. Police work can be a very comprehensive endeavor, or sometimes one incident will define your entire year or career. For BPD this year there was no one incident that stood out as being above and beyond the "norm," if there is any such thing in police work. Consequently, the department chose to evaluate who was the best overall officer during the past year, looking at professionalism, attendance, performance, and attitude. With these criteria in mind, one officer was at or near the top in every category—Officer Nolan Byrd.

Officer Byrd was hired by the City of Bulverde in November 2008 as a patrolman, and continues to serve the community in that capacity. He attended San Antonio College, where he completed the peace officer training course and was hired by the Bulverde Police Department shortly thereafter. Officer Byrd is routinely recognized by his peers and supervisors as one of our most active officers, and one who carries out his role with tremendous courtesy and respect. His abilities as a police officer continue to grow. Most recently he has been perfecting his stolen vehicle recognition skills. Over the last year Officer Byrd has identified several stolen trailers, construction equipment, and other items while on patrol. Officer Byrd is also very active in serving warrants, narcotic arrests, and traffic enforcement. With the average speeding citation being written for about 15 miles over the legal limit, Officer Byrd sets an excellent example for our department in maintaining roadway safety for travel in our community. Officer Byrd sets a high standard for himself and serves the citizens of Bulverde with a great deal of respect and courtesy and, in doing so, deserves to be recognized for a job well done.

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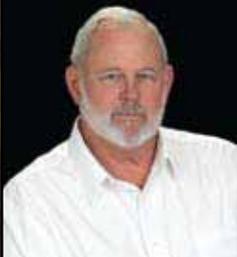
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Meet Your County Commissioner

Hello from Scott Haag, your Comal County Commissioner for Precinct #2. I hope you had a very special Christmas with family and friends. We never want to forget what Christmas is about and what a special time of year it is for us all. I was asked to write a little something, and I thought that I would just write some general information and hope that you enjoy. This is the end of my third year as Commissioner. My area (Pct #2) covers the southern end of Comal County and the entire area that borders Bexar County. This area includes Bulverde, Garden Ridge, and a small portion of New Braunfels. This being said, Pct #2 is a large area and runs the entire length of the County from East to West. I have enjoyed serving the people of Pct #2 and I hope that I have lived up to the expectations of the people. I have tried to be available and serve all areas of Pct #2 in an equal and fair manner. In 2014 I hope to establish a certain day of the week where I can have some office time in the Bulverde area where people can come by and visit with me and it will be more convenient for them to stop by since I plan to be in the area. When I have set that time I will make sure that this information is passed along. Please visit the Comal County website and go to the Department tab and click on Commissioners Court to get more information about any of the Commissioners and County Judge. Please feel free to contact me by e-mail at haagsc@co.comal.tx.us or by phone at 830-221-1102. I look forward to helping you in any way that I can.



Best Wishes,

Scott Haag
Comal County Commissioner
Pct #2

Military Families Make Great Foster Parents for Pets

-by Jenny Burgess, Animal Rescue Connections

Active duty military face special challenges when adopting a pet. Frequent relocations, especially to countries which require quarantine, or offer limited housing options, as well as deployments, may make it difficult to commit to the lifelong care of a companion animal, at least while serving their country.

However, fostering is a great way to enjoy the benefits of having a pet without the worry of what to do when faced with deployment or change of station. All animal rescue groups and shelters (worldwide) rely on foster pet parents to help them save the lives of stray and unwanted kittens, cats, puppies and dogs. Foster parents care for the animal, or animals until they are ready for adoption, helping to socialize them so they can find a happy forever home. Usually, all veterinary care, food and other supplies are provided by the organization. Fostering is also a great way to teach children how to be responsible for a pet and how they can help animals in need. For more information on becoming a pet's foster parent in the Bulverde/Spring Branch area, go to www.animalrescueconnections.org/Foster-Program.html or www.bulverdeareahumanesociety.com/volunteer.html.

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From Paula's Desk

- by Paula White, 2013 Chair

Closing Out the Year

As 2013 comes to a close, so does my time as Chair of the Board of the Bulverde/Spring Branch Area Chamber of Commerce. I am proud of the wonderful job our chamber has done this year for our members and for our community. We launched our Shop Local program to emphasize the importance of keeping our dollars in our community. We were able to hire a dedicated and talented new President in Rhonda Zunker who, under the leadership of a fine group of board directors, will continue to lead our growing Chamber to new heights.

Serving as Chair this year has truly been a wonderful experience as I've served with a great group of dedicated board members. The love these board members have for their community and its future is truly contagious. Exciting times are ahead of us, and under the competent leadership of the new Chair of the Board Sherry Tolbert, next year will be even better. A solid foundation has been laid and if we continue building upon that foundation we will succeed and lead our business community into an unprecedented growth that will make all of us proud. May your 2014 be prosperous and blessed!

Training — As local businesses, there is typically a struggle to keep up with new developments and business methods. There are times when getting the necessary resources is just too expensive to allow the local business to keep up with things as they would like. Other times, the time shortage prohibits travel days for this effort. Additionally, training more than one person increases both time and money stress.

Going forward, the Chamber intends to become a great help in this area. We'll be offering classes in a wide variety of business topics including Facebook, Twitter, and other social media tools. More operations-focused training will also be offered to enhance skills in business planning and management. Be sure to make any suggestion you might have for a great teacher or online program that would be beneficial. This certainly should help us all grow with this wonderful community.

Communication and Networking — You've seen an increased level of communication in recent years with the Chamber eblasts and the community information coming from the Chamber. Facebook and other social media interactions will be enhanced to keep you more involved in the community and Chamber events.

New volunteer opportunities will allow you to participate in quick projects with the Chamber. These quick projects, in addition to the longer term committees, will get more people involved during the year with less time issues and more fun! This is a great time to get to know other Chamber members and to benefit from their expertise as well.

Watch for the upcoming excitement and come on out and benefit from all that the Chamber can do for you!



From Sherry's Desk

- by Sherry Tolbert, 2014 Chair

Looking Ahead to 2014

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 Farmers Insurance-Whitney Rambia Agency
 He Is Life Ministries
 Karen Clark's Bookkeeping Services
 Kingdom Psychotherapy & Wellness
 Limestone Country Properties
 The Posh Pedi-Carolyn Woollard
 Catherine Scroggins-Brownlow
 Sterling Pest Management
 Wine 101-Bulverde
 Wine of Mine

RENEWING

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 American Bank of Texas
 Anytime Fitness Central Texas
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 Bulverde Community Center
 Bulverde Feed & Seed
 Bulverde MRI and Diagnostics
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 CBS Systems, Inc.
 CMW General Contractors, LLC
 Community Bible Church Bulverde
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 Frost Bank
 Martha Gaston
 Golden Key Enterprises, Inc.
 GVTC
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 Kathleen Banse State Farm Insurance
 Jan Kennedy
 Kim Compton with Reliance Residential Realty

KM Designs, Inc.
 Light Shine Ministries
 Lone Star Real Estate Services - Yvonne L Chapman
 M & P Underground LLC
 M & S Engineering, LLC
 Melody Rackley with Reliance Residential Realty
 Middleman Construction Company LLC
 Morkovsky + Associates, Inc., Architect
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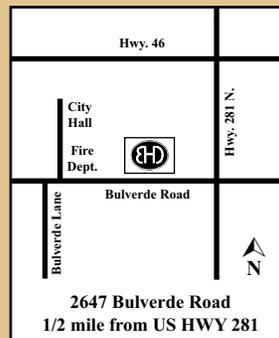
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B/SB Area Chamber of Commerce Events Calendar

JAN. 15

Chamber Monthly Power Lunch
12 Noon - 1:00 pm; Location: Bulverde Spring Branch Library
See Chamber website: (www.bulverdespringbranchchamber.com)
Or call the Chamber office (830-438-4285) to register.

x

JAN. 23

Business Networking Mixer
5:30 - 7:30 pm; Sponsored by Frost Bank
Member Only Event

FEB. 19

Chamber Monthly Power Lunch
12 Noon - 1:00 pm; Location: Bulverde Spring Branch Library
See Chamber website: (www.bulverdespringbranchchamber.com)
Or call the Chamber office (830-438-4285) to register.

FEB. 27

Business Networking Mixer
5:30 - 7:30 pm; Sponsored by Capital Title & Reliance Residential Realty
Member Only Event



Bulverde Park Update

-by Charles Schultz

The redesign and renovation of the Bulverde Community Park on Bulverde Lane should be complete by late January. Residents will be able to stroll through the park on concrete walkways, gather in a gazebo or one of the covered pavilions, get a drink of water, watch the kids on the playground, and more. A formal Grand Opening is scheduled for spring, 2014. Watch for more information about the Grand Opening in the March issue of *The Front Porch News*.

The Bulverde Community Parks Association Friends of the Park committee is continuing its membership and 'Buy a Brick' campaign. The 'Buy a Brick' program is selling 4" x 8" and 8" x 8" bricks that can be inscribed with four lines of text. The red paver bricks will then be laid in the walkways throughout the park. Purchasers can select the area where they would like their brick placed. The bricks are available for donations of \$40 to \$250 and can be purchased by individuals, families, and businesses.

Membership in the Bulverde Community Parks Associations is available for individuals as a Friend of the Park or as a Founder member (rates vary). Membership

funds as well as proceeds from brick sales will be used throughout the year to the facilities in Bulverde parks with additional events, promotions and educational opportunities. More information is available on the group's website: www.bulverdeparks.com.



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Prevention is one key to staying out of the ambulance...

The Bulverde-Spring Branch EMS is dedicated to serving the community and emergency response is our primary mission, but did you know that 10% of our calls are related to illness that might have been prevented. Flu season, like our Texas weather, is unpredictable—we never quite know when the season will hit, how bad it will be, or even what specific strain we will endure. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies the peak of the flu season to be traditionally in January and February, however it may begin as early as October.

To prepare for the flu season, consult with your physician about receiving a flu shot—the CDC recommends everyone 6 months of age and older to get immunized annually. In addition, you can take everyday preventive steps by washing your hands regularly, and making sure surfaces like doorknobs and computer key boards, are disinfected often. Good hand washing protects against the spread of many illnesses from the common cold, to more serious illnesses such as meningitis, flu, hepatitis A, and most types of infectious diarrhea.

When Should you Wash your Hands?

- After using the bathroom
- After blowing your nose or coughing
- Before eating, serving or preparing food
- After touching pets or other animals
- After outdoor activities
- Before and after visiting anyone who's sick
- When your hands are dirty
- After changing a diaper



How to Wash Your Hands...

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water.
2. Apply soap and rub/scrub your hands together—make sure to get the back of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Continue to rub and scrub for 20 seconds—you can sing the “ABC” song
4. Rinse your hands under running water
5. Dry your hands with a clean towel or air dry them.

Hand washing with soap and water is the best way to reduce germs, but if they are not available you can use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

1. Apply the product to the palm of your hand.
2. Rub your hands together.
3. Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until it is dry.

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You Could Be Here





Police Officers Educating Teens

- by Gary Haecker, Bulverde Police Department Chief of Police

After working nearly two decades in law enforcement, there is one thing that never seems to change: many young people change their lives and the lives of many around them with a single decision. Sometimes these decisions affect the rest of their lives, and occasionally these decisions mean the difference between life and death. Young adults don't always consider the consequences when making decisions. The Bulverde Police Department would like to assist young adults with understanding they have a choice and the decision is theirs to make. To assist with this, the Bulverde Police Department has built an educational program called POET—*Police Officers Educating Teens*.

There are many reasons to put together a program such as this, and one reason is that the Bulverde Police Department recognized many young adults have little or no opportunities to interact with police officers except in enforcement situations. The POET program gives these young adults and their parents an opportunity to speak with officers in a classroom setting while affording officers and court personnel a chance to present their message. First and foremost, the program is designed to help young adults make better decisions, hopefully a decision that might save a life—someone else's or their own. The course is based on the decision making process and how decisions made today may possibly affect the rest of one's life. The class will be taught by police officers and court personnel, and have occasional guest speakers. Topics of discussion will include Drinking and Driving, Social Media, Drugs, Distracted Driving, Bullying, and other topics affecting today's young adults. With many of these topics, we will discuss actual incidents that have occurred right here in our community, giving real life examples. The bottom line is "It's your life, it's your decision, make the right choice."

The POET program is free to anyone who would like to attend, with a target audience of young adults between 15–20 years of age. The program may also be a requirement of the Bulverde Municipal Court as conditions of the court for certain offenses. The first presentation of the class was held on Friday, December 6th, with great success. Anyone interested in attending future sessions should contact Mary Bell at the Police Department at 830-438-3612, ext. 217, to register. We look forward to making a difference in our community.

Deadline to File for Flooding-Related Disaster Loans is January 21st

Low-interest federal disaster loans are available to Texas residents and business owners affected by the severe storms and flooding that occurred from October 30–31, 2013. The Small Business Administration acted under its own authority to declare a disaster in response to a request SBA received from Gov. Rick Perry on November 20, 2013. The disaster declaration makes SBA assistance available in the primary Texas counties of Caldwell, Hays, and Travis and the neighboring counties of Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Comal, Fayette, Gonzales, Guadalupe, and Williamson.

"Low-interest federal disaster loans are available to homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private, nonprofit organizations whose property was damaged or destroyed by this disaster," said SBA's San Antonio District Director Pamela Sapia.

Disaster loan information and application forms are available from SBA's Customer Service Center. Call (800) 659-2955 or e-mail disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

The filing deadline to return applications for property damage is January 21, 2014. The deadline to return economic injury applications is August 22, 2014.

We need your donations of used clothing and household goods.

Your donations will be used to support the Medina Children's Home in Medina Texas and Boles Children's home in Quinlan Texas.

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Managing and Planning for Growth: Planning and Zoning Update

- by Dr. Larry Sunn, Bulverde Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman

Bulverde is at a crossroads of development. Area growth is again accelerating as the economy improves and Comal County has the highest projected growth in Texas. Left unmanaged and unplanned, development in and around the City threatens to haphazardly redefine our Hill Country density, land use, building standards, culture and beauty.

The Bulverde Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z), in conjunction with City staff, spent an extensive period of deliberation over the Spring and Summer of 2013 identifying various planning initiatives that will provide value to the thoughtful and orderly development of Bulverde and western Comal County now and well into the future. In upcoming issues of The Front Porch News, future P&Z updates will present more specific rationales for these planning efforts, as well as their importance and projected outcomes:

- **Mobility Plan.** (Initiated) A multi-modal transportation plan is intended to mitigate the increasing congestion Bulverde faces and enhance mobility, given the current capacity of rural roadways as well as the anticipated growth in and around the City.
- **Drainage and Storm Water Management Plan.** (State grant funding application initiated) Provides a framework, legal authority, and specifications to establish required drainage and flood avoidance infrastructure.
- **Wastewater and Water Recycling Study.** (Phase I and II initiated) An infrastructure plan for Bulverde to better manage growth, land use, and the future character of the community via wastewater and water recycling.
- **Land Use Plan.** (Complete within the City limits, but lacking in the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction [ETJ]) It serves as a guide to future development patterns, establishes planning districts, and facilitates compatibility with existing land uses.

- **Population 5,000 Plan.** (Completed) A mid-census evaluation of the current population level within the City limits; reconfirming the population to be over 5,000, which allows for the citizens of the community to seek a city charter referendum if desired.
- **Communication and Engagement Plan.** (Partially completed) To engage residents and help them better understand and actively resolve issues our community faces.
- **Community Pride Plan.** The character of the place where people live and participate in their community intensifies their sense of ownership; they take pride in their community, engage in its governance, and work toward making it a better place for their families and neighbors.
- **Sales Tax Corrective Legislation Strategy.** (Initiated) To explore cooperative sales tax revenue sharing in newly annexed areas; capable via new state legislation approved in 2013, and perhaps form a coalition of Texas cities with similar sales tax boundary issues.
- **Update the Sunrise 2025 Comprehensive Plan.** (Initiated) Review the status of action items identified in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan and update it to incorporate these planning efforts as well as the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- **Graphic Information Systems (GIS).** Continue to leverage and enhance a GIS system already in place via Comal County, enabling Bulverde to examine and use large databases of information in a graphical, layered, map-type format to enhance government transparency and planning efforts.
- **Heritage Recognition Plan.** Finally, the P&Z recommended establishing a volunteer ad hoc committee to help identify local sites of historical significance that help explain and define the heritage of Bulverde; assisting in these sites being recognized and serving as a base-point for potential historical preservation efforts.

These P&Z recommendations translated into many of the City Council's adopted Goals and Near-Term Action Items, which are also further elaborated in this issue of the Front Porch News. Join us and help us plan and guide our community's future at monthly P&Z meetings held at Bulverde City Hall on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30.

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The Bulverde Holiday Lighting a Great Success!

- by Joanne Hall, 2013 Bulverde Christmas Lighting Chair

The 23rd Annual Bulverde Christmas Lighting was a great success thanks to so many folks who planned and contributed to the event. The new Christmas tree provided by the City of Bulverde and all the lights were perfect, making Downtown Bulverde look like a Winter Wonderland. The children were so excited to see Santa and his Elf Dawn arrive on the Bulverde Fire Truck, and they were able to visit with them in the Santa House located near Mike's in the Village restaurant.

Several sponsors provided great food and goodies. Sausage on a stick, hot dogs (1100 of them!), hot chocolate, and homemade bread pudding was just some of the free fare enjoyed by the crowd. Many of the participating businesses had fun activities for the children at their booths.

For entertainment, Charlie Wood provided music in front of his shop where members of Joanie's Dance Studio also performed their dance numbers. Carolers from Bulverde Baptist Church and Heritage Baptist Church strolled through the crowd, and children were able to send off their letters to Santa from the Bulverde Post Office.

This was the second year for two big attractions at the event that were enjoyed by all. Children young and old played in real snow in the amphitheater, which was made possible by several donors. Admission to the snow area was a donation of nonperishable food to Provisions, formerly the Bulverde Food Pantry. Lots of food items were collected. Many children also delighted in a ride on the Blue Lion Train offered by the Spring Branch-Bulverde Lion's Family Club.

Bulverde Police Chief Haecker and his officers worked tirelessly to ensure participants were safe and that the event ran smoothly. Children enjoyed face painting at their booth as well.

The event is a community effort hosted by the City of Bulverde, the Friends of the Village, and the Bulverde/Spring Branch Area Chamber of Commerce. The event has grown tremendously and would not take place without the cooperation of many businesses, civic groups and individuals. A special thank you is extended to Bulverde United Methodist Church, Sam Roberts Photography, Robert Evans, and South Texas Growers, all the many businesses, organizations, volunteers and vendors that worked hard to make the 23rd Annual Christmas Lighting such a magnificent local event.



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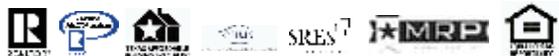
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Average Monthly Call Volume - 160

12% Fire

18% Public Assist

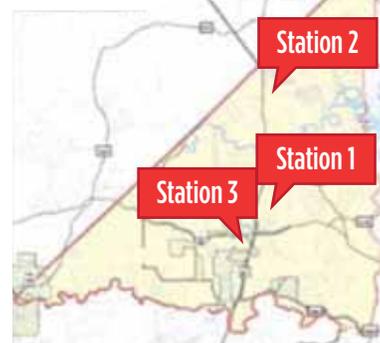
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Average Time on Task EMS - 75 minutes

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Local Lions Learn to Detect Eye Problems in Toddlers

- by Dr. Larry Sunn

The Spring Branch-Bulverde Lions received training in November to learn how to preserve the eyesight of area youngsters using the Spot vision screener. It's as, "easy as 1 2 3," states the Family Lions Club Vice President, Gary Dawson.

The free, public service program serves children ages 6 months to 5 years old in Bulverde area daycare centers, a group that does not often receive early vision screening. "Our goal is to screen 3,000 youngsters in two years," said Dawson. In addition to children in daycare, Lions use the Spot device to screen local prekindergarteners, special education, non-English-speaking students, and Head Start children.

Although the Lions target the underserved 6 months to 5-years-old age group, spot vision screening easily screens all age groups. Screening requires minimal cooperation from children, is quick and noninvasive, and provides accurate results that are easy for parents to understand. The small portable device has a capture time of 1 second and works from about 3 feet away; its automated screen provides thorough, objective results in seconds in English or Spanish.

Spot instantly detects indications of major vision issues including: farsightedness, nearsightedness, eye misalignment, blurred vision, pupil size deviation, and unequal refractive power.

A child with an undetected or untreated vision problem is more likely to develop social or emotional problems. Thus, a child's vision problems can affect not only their own learning, but that of their peers. Lions are committed to helping children reach their full potential by providing an objective and accurate vision-screening device.

The Spot vision screener uses breakthrough technology and represents what vision screening should be. For more information, including how to schedule a free Lions visit at your child's facility, email Dr. Larry Sunn at lasunn@gvtc.com or call 210.286.8050.



THE LION'S CLUB DELIVERING CHRISTMAS GOODIES

Spring Branch-Bulverde Family Lions Club delivers toys and food from their tenth annual holiday toy and food drive. The Lions collected over 1000 pounds of food that they delivered to Provisions (f.k.a. the Bulverde Food Pantry). The toys were delivered to two locations: the Bill Brown Elementary School for wrapping and delivery to local youngsters, and Bulverde's St. Jude's Ranch for Children. Service in the Spring Branch-Bulverde Lions Family Club is open to families in the greater Bulverde area; they meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Bulverde Activity Center. The Club also operates the Blue Lion Train and hosts an annual classic car show on the last Saturday in March. Join us!

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City of Bulverde Animal Care

Several years ago, the City of Bulverde established an Animal Control Ordinance to help better regulate loose dogs, aggressive dogs, “nuisance” animals, and livestock. The ordinance is generally enforced by the City’s Animal Control Officer during normal business hours and by available police personnel outside of normal business hours. To report a violation of the Animal Control Ordinance, please contact City Hall (830-438-3612) during normal business hours (8AM-5PM, M-F) and the nonemergency dispatch line (830-620-3408) outside of normal business hours and on weekends.

What happens when an animal complaint is received by the City? Each complaint will be logged by City staff and investigated. While the City makes every effort to promptly respond to each complaint, depending on the time of day the complaint is received and the availability of the Animal Control Officer or a police officer, some time may elapse before the investigation is initiated. If the investigation uncovers a violation, the City then takes steps to address the violation.

What constitutes a violation of the Ordinance? Some common examples of violations include a loose dog “roaming” the neighborhood; not having a dog on a leash or lead; having swine (pigs) in the City Limits; an owner not providing adequate care for their animals; selling/giving away animals in a parking lot or along a roadway; dogs chasing people or other animals; and animals making excessive noise or creating offensive odors. For more specific information please visit the applicable ordinance at <http://www.ci.bulverde.tx.us/default.aspx?name=ordinances>

How are violations of the Ordinance addressed? The City makes every effort to work with animal owners to correct the violation in a timely fashion without issuing citations. In addition, for citations to be issued, City personnel typically must witness/observe the actual violation. The exception to this is if a complainant is willing to complete an affidavit detailing the violation and is willing to testify in municipal court. A citation is generally considered the “last resort” or final step of the City’s enforcement action. Education regarding the ordinance requirements, verbal warnings, and written warnings are often used to resolve violations. Repeat violations from the same individual and the severity of situations can both raise the level of enforcement action necessary to mitigate a situation.

What happens to domestic animals that are roaming loose and picked up by City personnel? The City has agreements with area boarding facilities to ensure the animals are properly sheltered and cared for. The primary goal of the City is to get loose pets returned to their owners as quickly as possible. In some cases, this is a relatively easy task, as the animals may have a tag and/or microchip, or the owners have quickly contacted the City looking for their missing pet. The

City highly encourages all pet owners to tag/microchip their animals and quickly notify the City of they have gone missing. Once ownership is established, and after payment of any applicable boarding fees, the dogs are returned to their owner. If the owner cannot be identified (no tag, microchip, or owner contact), the City holds the animal for a minimum of five days. During this holding period the City hopes the owners make contact or that neighbors can provide leads for possible owners. The City makes every attempt to track down the potential owners of picked up animals. At the end of the holding period, if the owners were unable to be identified or they refuse to take possession of their animals, the animals become the property of the City. The City works closely with the Bulverde Area Humane Society and utilizes their services to attempt to have these abandoned animals rehomed to new adoptive families. Once the City turns over the animals to the Humane Society they become the property of the Humane Society. The City’s cooperative work with BAHS is noncontractual and is in keeping with the best interest of the animals and with the Humane Society’s “no kill” policy. Unfortunately, not all breeds of animals, or animals that display aggressive behaviors, are eligible for adoption through the Humane Society. When faced with this situation, the City’s only available option is humane euthanization performed by a qualified veterinarian, usually at the veterinarian’s private clinic facility; an option of last resort and an unfortunate consequence of modern society’s tendency for animal abandonment. The City encourages all pet owners to have their animals spayed or neutered and to think about pet adoption from a local shelter first when looking for a new pet.

I have an animal control issue but I am afraid to call and complain about my neighbor to the City? Can I make an anonymous complaint? The City treats all complaints as anonymous. The only exception to this is when a complainant is willing to complete an affidavit so that a citation can be issued to the violator in order to more speedily mitigate the issue.

Girl Scouts Flag Retirement Ceremony

The Girl Scouts of the Honey Creek Service Unit held a flag retirement ceremony at the Bulverde Fire Station on Cougar Bend to honor our veterans and to demonstrate the proper way to retire flags too worn to fly. Photo by Lisa Weidmann.



Chamber of Commerce Annual Award Winners

Each year the Bulverde/Spring Branch Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes businesses and members of the community that have given outstanding service and involvement in their community. The Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony was held on December 3, 2013 at the newly completed addition to the Bulverde/Spring Branch Activity Center. The event was cosponsored by the Bulverde/Spring Branch Activity Center and CIMA Hospice in New Braunfels. Sam's Club donated the Networking Bingo Prize which was a \$100 Sam's Gift Card.

This year the Chamber of Commerce is proud to recognize the **Bulverde-Spring Branch EMS as the "2013 Business of the Year"**.



Executive Director, Mechelle Salmon and Chief Mark Southwell "manage a wonderful team that take caring for the health and spiritual needs of the residents and visitors in the Bulverde Spring Branch area one step further. Their commitment begins long before a call for help and lasts far beyond the safe delivery to an emergency room. This devotion to serve others runs deep just like Guadalupe River that flows through our service area. BSBEMS is built on the core values of Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Empathy." www.BSBEMS.org.

"2013 Chamber Volunteer of the Year" is Joanne T Hall with South Texas Growers, Inc.



Joanne has served as Chair of the Fundraising and Events Council, served on the Board of Directors and has been an integral part of the success of the Chamber of Commerce over the past several years working with the Taste of the Hills Gala, Golf Tournament, Market Days and Hometown Holidays in the Hills. Her leadership skills are great, she is very organized and always there when we need her.

"2013 Community Volunteer of the Year" is Kathleen Banse with Kathleen Banse State Farm Insurance.



Not only has she given tirelessly over the past years to the Chamber of Commerce, she is also involved with the Friends of the Library, Bulverde-Spring Branch EMS Denim & Diamonds Gala, Bulverde Area Republican Women, supports the Bulverde/Spring Branch Activity Center and many other local organizations.

This year the Chamber of Commerce also honored our **First Responders that serve us in the Bulverde Spring Branch Area**. Pictured from left to right are: Bulverde Spring Branch EMS Director Mechelle Salmon and Lead Medic Jeffrey Zelenak; Spring Branch Fire Rescue Captain Royce Peshorn; Chief Dustin Beaudoin with both Spring Branch Fire Rescue and Bulverde Fire Department; Bulverde Fire Department Lieutenant Ruben Smith; Bulverde Police Department Chief Gary Haecker and Officer Nolan Byrd; Comal County Sheriff's Department Deputy Richard Ormsby and Sheriff Bob Holder. Each of these first responders provides our community with the security that we need.



A Word of Thanks from the BSB ESDs

Thank you, community, for another sensational Denim & Diamonds, which provides exceptional equipment for our uninsured clinic and in our ambulances. We are so grateful.





BULVERDE FOOD PANTRY CHANGES NAME TO *PROVISIONS*

The Bulverde Food Pantry announced that it has changed its name to *Provisions* in an effort to better represent the multiple services it provides to those in need in the community. Founded by an alliance of Bulverde-area churches with the vision that together they could serve more people more efficiently than they could individually, the organization has been helping people struggling to meet the basic needs of day-to-day living for the past 23 years.

“This name change is intended to better represent who we are as an organization,” said Bob Barrar, president of Provisions. “Although we’re based in Bulverde, we actually serve the four zip codes that surround Bulverde. Also, although our name indicated we were a food pantry, we actually provide many provisions other than food. This name change allows us to better represent the services we provide to those in need in our community.”

The Board of Directors recognizes the ability to help the needy in the community is tied directly to the ability to raise the necessary funds. Based on that, a driving force behind creating a more inclusive name and brand is to raise the awareness of what Provisions does as an organization, while also raising awareness of the challenge of hunger in the Texas Hill Country.

“We are a Christian-based organization,” Barrar added, “and we recognize our responsibility to take care of those in need. Our tagline is a reference to Matthew 25:35: ‘For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.’ We proudly exclaim to the world that this responsibility is the foundation of our efforts.”

Although the organization’s name has changed, the purpose has not. The purpose of the Bulverde Food Pantry was to serve its neighbors who were lacking life’s immediate necessities while providing assistance and guidance toward a better life. That purpose has not changed. Likewise, the vision was to provide families and individuals with the tools and resources necessary to empower them to move toward more productive and responsible living. That vision will continue to be the vision of Provisions.

About Provisions

Provisions is a Bulverde-based service organization helping people who are struggling to meet the basic needs of day-to-day living. We do that by supplying necessary provisions, including food, household necessities, and clothing. We operate a warehouse at 2295-1 Bulverde Road in Bulverde, Texas.



Developing a Strategic Plan for Business Retention and Expansion

Existing businesses are, without a doubt, the largest and most reliable source for creating new jobs and generating increased ad valorem and sales tax revenues for a community. The Bulverde/Spring Branch Economic Development Foundation believes building awareness of the needs of existing employers and developing policies and tools to support local business and industry should be one of the highest priorities for economic development efforts in our community. If we don’t support the businesses we have, our community runs the risk of losing these businesses to other communities. This is why it is important to be aware of the many issues and challenges that our existing businesses face, as well as understanding how the business climate affects private sector investment decisions.

Our businesses need access to a diverse range of programs and services, including workforce development, marketing, land acquisition, and financing. Because of this diversity, it is clear that improving our business climate cannot be successful without partnerships. As a result, the Bulverde/Spring Branch Economic Development Foundation, in collaboration with the Bulverde/Spring Branch Area Chamber of Commerce, CPS Energy, the City of Bulverde and other regional partners, will be launching a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program in early 2014. A BRE Task Force will be created and will consist of several two-person visitation teams that will contact our local business owners/leaders to schedule visits. We ask all area businesses to please take the time to meet with us so we can become knowledgeable about your needs and the issues you face. Gathering this information will enable us to strategically develop the programs and tools needed to retain and grow our existing businesses.



*Sherry Mosier,
Executive Director*

The BSBEDF looks forward to assisting our community in its efforts to manage growth and retain our existing businesses while preserving our rural character and quality of life. For more information about the BSBEDF, visit our website at www.bsbedf.com or call us at 830.885.4331.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Toddler Storytime

Mondays at 10:30am

Preschool Storytime

Wednesdays at 10:30am

Doris Mager, The Eagle Lady Program

January 2 and 4 at 11 am

Digital Library Resources Class

January 4 and 18 at 11 am

February 1 and 15 at 11 am

Texas Ranger, Mike Cox

January 30 at 6 pm

Electronics Recycling

January 25 from 10 am—2 pm

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BULVERDE AREA Humane Society— Committed to Remaining a “No Kill” Shelter

- by Carrye Franzel,
Bulverde Area Humane Society

One of the ongoing challenges for pet shelters is to maintain adequate funding to cover the costs of feeding, housing, and providing veterinary care for the animals. Every dog and cat taken in by the Bulverde Area Humane Society (BAHS) is evaluated by a veterinarian and any medical needs are addressed. Prior to adoption, every pet is spayed or neutered, microchipped and brought current on vaccinations. In an average month, we spend \$1500 on spay/neuter surgeries, \$600 on vaccinations and \$1,000 or more on food, flea/tick/heartworm protection, and microchips.

BAHS is funded by donations and must therefore deal with the uncertainty of month to month changes in individual giving. BAHS accepts no city or county contract funds that could bring in regular revenue, because to do so would compromise our ability to remain a no kill shelter.

We often need additional sources of support to cover operating costs, which brings us to something new for 2014. We are excited to announce the shelter's partnership with the Valero Texas Open *Birdies for Charity* program, the third oldest tournament on the PGA tour schedule. Every penny raised through *Birdies for Charity* will come back to BAHS, with the Valero Texas Open and *Birdies for Charity* paying all costs to run the program. You can support the Bulverde Area Humane Society and *Birdies for Charity* by making an online pledge at www.BulverdeShelter.com and choosing the *Birdies for Charity* logo at the bottom of our homepage.

Also new in 2014 is an initiative that will call attention to some special, long-term resident dogs and cats—adult and senior pets with sound temperaments, no behavioral issues, moderate exercise needs, and responsiveness to human handling—our “gold star” candidates for a smooth transition to being household pets. Like Lady Jane (pictured), they've simply been overlooked and need attention called to their very special qualities.



bulverde/spring branch
LIBRARY

Toddler Story Time

Start your toddler's week off on the right foot by bringing him or her to Toddler Story Time every Monday at 10:30 a.m. at Bulverde/Spring Branch Library. Each week we focus on a different letter of the alphabet to work on the beginning stages of letter recognition. The books are made interactive through the inclusion of repeating text-style stories and book retelling using flannel board activities, which promote story comprehension and memorization skills. Finger plays throughout the 30 minute story time help toddlers work on motor skills and coordination. No story time would be complete without plenty of songs to sing along with! Each Toddler Story Time concludes with a bean bag dance to Hap Palmer's "Bean Bag Alphabet Rag" and a letter craft that can be done at the library or taken home to complete later. For more information call Youth Services Librarian Elizabeth Hoff at 830-438-4864.

We Want Your Photos, Stories, and Ideas!

The *Front Porch News* is for you, Bulverde, and we want to include you in its publication. If you have a photo that you think represents our city and the surrounding community, please feel free to submit it for consideration. We welcome submissions, and might even use it for the cover! The same invitation is offered for your human interest articles or local historical stories, as well. Please feel free to submit your written pieces for consideration. The City will review all submissions and notify you if it is selected for publication. Photographers and authors will receive byline credit for published work. The *Front Porch News* now offers direct distribution to approximately 8,000 addresses in western Comal County. Please visit the City's website for more information and specific criteria for photo and article submissions. Electronic versions of past issues of the *Front Porch News* can also be found on the website. <http://www.ci.bulverde.tx.us>

Send email to editor@ci.bulverde.tx.us.



A Quick Shot

Susan Eisenbrey, a local amateur photographer, submitted this lively photograph of dancers at Anhalt Hall. She wrote in her submission, "I had never been to Anhalt Hall before September and I loved it. From now on when we have out of town guests we will take them to the rodeo and Anhalt Hall for pure Texas entertainment."

Susan has lived in Bulverde for 10 years and works in downtown San Antonio. She is an amateur photographer who has had critical success with her photography, with her work being selected for exhibition and publication and winning awards since 2004. Her photos have been on exhibit in an Austin gallery, published in *Atlantic Monthly*, featured on the Discovery Channel, and won awards in local and regional contests. We would like to thank Susan for sharing her photo with the *Front Porch News*.

GIVING BACK LOCALLY: BONNYE RENFRO

Bonnye Renfro and her team at Hair Tech Plus get into the holiday spirit by giving to others who may be going through a rough time—particularly the children. For the past several years, Bonnye and her team have donated Christmas stockings filled with goodies for area children, which they donate through Provisions (f.k.a. the Bulverde Food Pantry). Their enthusiasm has been so contagious that their customers and friends have joined the effort. This year, Bonnye and her team donated almost 200 stuffed Christmas stockings for children in Western Comal County. Ms. Renfrow is an outstanding example of community-minded local business owners and managers sharing their hearts and their success with neighbors who are not as fortunate. Provisions and the happy stocking recipients salute Bonnye and her team at Hair Tech Plus for their true Christmas spirit.



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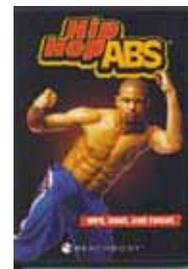
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2014 GREAT DECISIONS

DISCUSSION SERIES

at Bulverde/Spring Branch Library

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This series from the Foreign Policy Association, focuses on the global challenges of our time. It is free and open to the public, Thursdays from March 6 through April 24 from 6 pm - 8 pm.

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Topics

March 6 - Defense Technology
March 13 - Israel and the U.S.
March 20 - Turkey's Challenge
March 27 - Islamic Awakening
April 3 - Energy Independence
April 10 - Food and Climate
April 17 - China's Foreign Policy
April 24 - U.S. Trade Policy

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Read ^{the} book **Before** you see ^{the} movie.



Divergent by Veronica Roth

In Beatrice's dystopian world, society is divided into five factions, each dedicated to a particular virtue. On an appointed day of every year, all sixteen-year-olds must select the faction to which they will devote the rest of their lives. For Beatrice, the decision is between staying with her family and being who she really is--she can't have both. So she makes a choice that surprises everyone, including herself. **Movie scheduled for March 2014.**



The Maze Runner by James Dashner

Sixteen-year-old Thomas wakes up with no memory in the middle of a maze called the Glade and realizes he must work with the other Gladers to escape. All they know is that every thirty days a new boy is delivered in the lift, until, one day, a girl is sent up—the first girl to ever arrive in the Glade. More surprising yet is the message she delivers. Thomas might be more important than he could ever guess. **Movie scheduled for September 2014.**



The Giver by Lois Lowry

Given his lifetime assignment at the Ceremony of Twelve, Jonas becomes the receiver of memories shared by only one other in his community and discovers the terrible truth about the society in which he lives. **Movie scheduled for August 2014.**

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JANUARY

*Bulverde
and other local events*

FEBRUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
NOTES: City & Park meetings held at Bulverde City Hall (30360 Cougar Bend).			1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	NOTES: City & Park meetings held at Bulverde City Hall (30360 Cougar Bend).						1
5	6	7 Planning & Zoning 6:30p	8 BAAC Mtg. 6:30p (Art Center)	9 Friends of the Park 6:30p Wine & Art 6:00 (Art Center)	10 New Exhibit Reception 6:00p (Art Center)	11	2	3	4 Planning & Zoning 6:30p	5 SBB Lions 7:30p (Activity Center) BAAC Mtg. 6:30p (Art Center)	6 Friends of the Park 6:30p	7	8
12	13 Library Dist. Board 4:00p (Library) ESD #5 7:00p (Cougar Bend)	14 City Council 6:30p	15 ESD #4 6:00p (353 Rodeo Dr.) SBB Lions 7:30p (Activity)	16	17	18	9	10 Library Dist. Board 4:00p (Library) ESD #5 7:00p (Cougar Bend)	11 City Council 6:30p	12 ESD #4 6:00p (353 Rodeo Dr.)	13 Wine & Art 6:00p (Art Center)	14 St. Valentine's Day	15
19	20 BSB EMS 6:00p (353 Rodeo Dr.) MLK Day	21 Ntv. Plant Soc. 7:00p (GVTC)	22	23 ESD #1 6:00p (353 Rodeo Dr.)	24	25	16	17 BSB EMS 6:00p (353 Rodeo Dr.) President's Day	18 Ntv. Plant Soc. 7:00p (GVTC)	19 SBB Lions 7:30pm (Activity Center)	20 ESD #1 6:00pm (353 Rodeo Dr.)	21	22
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	
Cat TNR class 2:00p (353 Rodeo Dr.)													