

February 2019

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monthly

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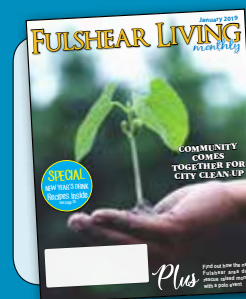
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Fulshear finds its future

Mayor Aaron Groff reflects on the past, discusses present, shares vision for the future of Fulshear

Story & photos by **CLAIRE GOODMAN**



Mayor Aaron Groff (second from left) credited city officials and local law enforcement for the success of Fulshear.

There's no question that Fulshear is growing at a rapid pace. The city population has exploded from 700 residents in 2008 to nearly 13,000 residents today. But just how the city will broaden and expand its infrastructure to accommodate this growth is the primary question being addressed by city officials and local commerce.

On Dec. 7, Mayor Aaron Groff and the Fulshear-Katy Chamber of Commerce hosted a "Fulshear Find your Future" meeting for citizens and local businesses. In the event, they laid out the progress of the city and explained how the city officials plan to keep up with that progression while still maintaining the "small-town charm" that makes Fulshear so appealing.

In his speech, Groff recalled the history of Fulshear and explained the timelines of both the development and population of the area. According to Groff, the city has experienced a 700 percent growth in the past five years. He addressed the current state of development in the city, and he explained many of the goals the city has moving forward.

POPULATION GROWTH

Groff opened with a quick history lesson on the city of Fulshear. Groff reported that the city of Fulshear was established by Churchill Fulshear in 1824. The first school in Fulshear was built in 1893. The Methodist church in downtown Fulshear was established in 1894, and the city was incorporated in 1977. At the time of Fulshear's incorporation, there were 400 residents living in the city.

Since then, the population has exploded. "(The Texas Department of Transportation) just put up a sign on the west side of town that says there are 10,044 people in Fulshear," Groff said. "That number is a little low. That's a July of 2017 number. The truth is, we're somewhere between 12,000 and 13,000, depending on whether you're counting yesterday or tomorrow. Because that's just how quick the city is growing."

By the numbers, the city of Fulshear had not grown significantly since its incorporation in 1977 until the mid 2000s. "I was working with Katy ISD and discovered that in 2003, the city of



The banquet hall at Safari Texas was filled with city officials, businesses, and local groups to hear about Mayor Aaron Groff's plans for the city of Fulshear.

Fulshear (population) was still right about at 400 residents," Groff said.

By 2008, the population had increased to 700 residents. "That was only 10 years ago, and today (the population) is about 12,000 or 13,000. If you include the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), we're right at 16,000 people," said Goff.

City officials predict that by the year 2027, the city of Fulshear will have early 29,000 residents within the city and a population of 87,000 when combined with the ETJ.

DEVELOPMENT

Groff credited builders and master-planned communities as a driving force behind the population increase.

"Fulshear Run has about 80 residents, and they're expecting to see 750 people by 2027. Old Town Fulshear's numbers indicate there's about 329 (residents) today, and we estimate that by 2027, (the number will be) right around 2,000. Cross Creek Ranch, the largest master-planned community, has about 10,000 residents, but we're looking at around 20,000 residents (by 2027)," Groff said.

The new developments have in turn created a need for new schools. Huggins Elementary opened in 1979, and until recently, that elementary school was able to meet the educational needs of the city. Groff discussed how new schools are being built and the ways in which the districts are expanding to accommodate the growing student numbers.

"Big things are happening in our schools. Huggins has been around for a long time, but now we've got a new middle school, we've got a new high school in the heart of Fulshear and another in Cross Creek Ranch. We've got two new elementaries that have opened their doors. We've got a new junior high and a new high school set to come online," he said.

Two school districts serve the Fulshear area. Lamar

Consolidated ISD is perhaps best known as the main district for Fulshear, but Groff noted 89 percent of Fulshear students actually attend Katy ISD schools.

The city of Fulshear is working closely with both school districts to make sure the building of new schools happens in sync with the building of new communities.

INFRASTRUCTURE

None of the rapid growth and expansion of Fulshear could be possible without an advancing infrastructure to support the changes to the city. City officials and city council are working diligently to improve the process by which new areas are developed and new businesses come to the area.

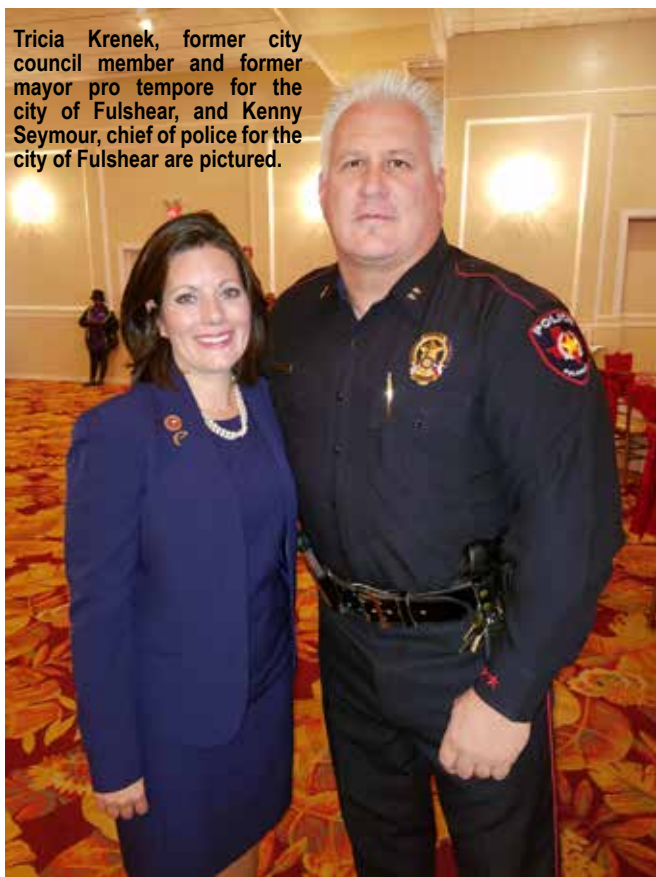
The city is creating a coordinated development ordinance. Groff explained, "We're looking at all the ordinances that have ever been passed in the city, and we're lining them up. So if you're a developer or builder or a resident you know exactly what the expectations are. (You know) what you can and can't do in regards to signage or trees. We are unifying all of our efforts."

The city council is also creating a development guide book to streamline the process by which builders can begin the process of developing land. "(Builders) can literally walk into the city and say, 'What do I need to do to build on this piece of property?,' and we will hand them the book, and it will have everything they need to know," said Groff.

To ease new builders through the development process, the city recently approved the purchase of a new software system which will allow for connectivity throughout the city. The process will make it easier for developers to obtain city permits and place and track work orders online. The software will improve the city's response time and also give developers online access to check the status of their requests.

Fulshear welcomes the new growth and development of the

Tricia Krenak, former city council member and former mayor pro tempore for the city of Fulshear, and Kenny Seymour, chief of police for the city of Fulshear are pictured.



area, but one of the main concerns of city officials is how to embrace new businesses and communities without sacrificing the “small-town charm” that makes Fulshear so appealing. To make sure the city grows in such a way that maintains its verve, the city has created an economic strategic plan for the first time in the history of Fulshear.

“For the first time this city is saying, ‘Growth is coming. We need to be able to manage it. We need to recruit the businesses we want.’ So we have retained a firm to help us develop a strategic plan for economic development so that we can go after the right business at the right time and show them this is the right land and these are the right owners,” Groff said.

The plan enables the city to expand indefinitely while adhering to the values and standards that are already in place. “The strategic plan will serve as a blueprint for the city moving forward when it comes to economic development,” Groff added.

Embracing its family-friendly culture, the city is currently designing a parks and recreation master plan to create new ballparks and ball fields.

“I talk to residents all the time, and they say the one thing that Fulshear doesn't have that they really want is ballparks,” Groff said. The city of Fulshear has the land for the parks, and plans are currently in place to add ball fields to that land. “Our dream is to take care of that parkland and get it fully functional and add some ball fields, so hopefully that will just enhance the high quality of life that we experience here in the city of Fulshear,” Groff added.

The new master plan also calls for plans that will increase the walkability of the city. The city will add new walking trails and pedestrian crossings so that the entire city will be interconnected enough for people to access every part of the city on foot. “People will have the ability to go from one part of Fulshear all the way to downtown,” explained Groff.

THE FUTURE OF FULSHEAR

Even with all the current changes to the city, Groff already looks forward to the future of the city. One vision he has is that of a new city hall for the city. The current building is charming but small; it only has space for four employees.

“Right now if you come to our city and do city business, you have to go to three or four different buildings just to accomplish a couple of simple tasks,” said Groff.

Groff envisions a city hall building large enough to accommodate not only the city staff but to welcome local groups as a central meeting place. Organizations like Cub Scouts and school groups have often asked to use city hall as a meeting place, only to be disappointed because the building is too small. Groff believes a new building will bring the city even closer by offering a central meeting place for the public.

In Groff's vision for Fulshear, the city will grow and expand while staying true to the core values that define the city.

Groff concluded, “We want Fulshear to be a local gathering point: a destination hub where we enjoy one another's company in a friendly family environment. We want you to know that as a city, we're going to do everything that we can to be prepared as new developments come our way as well as businesses that will help us maintain the small-town charm so that we might become a livable center without losing sight of who we are and where we came from.”



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Mayor Aaron Groff spoke at 'Fulshear Find your Future,' explaining the ways that the city is expanding and developing.



From left: Aaron Groff, mayor of Fulshear, Joe Zimmerman, mayor of Sugar Land, and Lou Boudreaux, former mayor of Simonton are pictured.

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TO THE RESCUE

first responder calendar spotlights rescue pets

by CLAIRE GOODMAN

Every day, local firefighters and police officers are saving human lives. Now they've teamed up with Special Pals Animal Shelter to save furry lives, too.

Special Pals is Houston's oldest no-kill animal shelter. Melissa Houser, president of Special Pal's board of directors had the idea to create a fundraising calendar featuring their adoptable shelter dogs, and she was inspired by the "Tax-Day Flood" of 2016 to use first responders as models posing with the dogs.

"We saw so many first responders getting out there and saving people, and I said, 'I really want to focus on local first responders. I want to focus on our local hometown heroes because they deserve so much appreciation, and I think it would be a great twist if we featured people who save humans saving the dogs,'" Houser said.

That was in September of 2016. In order to get the calendar out by January of 2017, Houser and the other volunteers at Special Pals had to scramble to contact first responders, shoot the pictures and print the calendar in three months. Professional photographer Glen Muse donated his time and skills to Special Pals, and several first responders readily agreed to have their pictures taken for the cause.

Special Pals named the calendar "Red, White and Rescue", and



Officer Don Hess, Fulshear Police Department, loves helping rescue dogs and has four personal rescue dogs at home. He is pictured with 'Myers' who is looking for a loving home.

despite the pressing deadline and hasty production, the calendar was a success. In their first year, Special Pals sold 500 calendars. Special Pals is a 501(c)(3) charity, so 100 percent of the funds

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went directly to the animals.

The Red White and Rescue calendar is in its third year of production, and there are now 13 different first responder groups that participate in the fundraiser: Katy Fire Department, Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, Sugar Land Police Department, Cy-Fair Volunteer Fire Department, Fulshear Police Department, Willowfork Fire Department, Atascocita Fire Department, Harris County Fire Marshal's Office, Harris County Sheriff's Office, Fulshear/Simonton Fire Department, Spring ISD Police Department, Missouri City Police Department and City of Prairie View/Town of San Felipe Police Department.

The first responders are proud to help dogs in need. Many of the police and firefighters have dogs of their own, and helping dogs find loving homes is an important cause for them.

Captain Mike McCoy of the Fulshear Police Department said, "This was our third year participating in the Special Pals calendar shoot. We were approached three years ago and asked if we wanted to help them with their theme "Red White and Rescue", which featured first responders. We were honored, excited and happy to help with this initiative. Just about every officer in our department has a dog and many are rescues. We wanted to do what we could to promote the adoption of these loving animals who are in desperate need of a home."

Anyone from the departments who wants to be in the calendar is welcome. "We don't turn anyone down, although we do ask that people who have been featured in previous years not be in the calendar twice. We want to focus on new first responders

every year," Houser said.

If they do have more than 13 people apply for the calendar, Special Pals will do group shots so everyone is included. "For example, the Katy fire department had a few people that applied from that one department, so we put the fire department together on one page," Houser said.

It's important to Houser that everyone who wants to be a part of the calendar is included. "Every single one of these men and women are saving lives, and we want to make sure they all get a spot," she added.

All the dogs in the calendars are adoptable from Special Pals with two exceptions: K-9 officer "Paco" from Spring Branch ISD Police Department and K-9 officer "Delta" from the Harris County Fire Marshal's office were featured in the calendar because they're first responders, too.

The other dogs in the calendar are available for adoption through Special Pals. Special Pals selects the dogs for the calendar based on how long they've been at the shelter. Dogs who have been there the longest or who are difficult to place get top priority. The calendar gives them extra exposure, which increases their chances of getting adopted.

Houser works closely with Valerie Murray, the Special Pals kennel manager, to make sure the dogs featured in the calendar are the dogs with the greatest needs. "She picks out the dogs that need highlighting and extra love and attention, and those are the dogs we put in the calendar," Houser said.

One of Houser's favorite adoption stories from the calendar is



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that of “Lexi” and “Giovanni”: a bonded pair who could not be adopted separately. Lexi is a large Doberman Pinscher, and Giovanni is a tiny Yorkshire Terrier. The pair could not be separated, but because of the size and temperament discrepancy between the two dogs, potential adopters were hard to find.

“They sat at our shelter for a really long time. Even if we did find people who were interested in adopting two dogs at once, the type of people who wanted a Doberman weren’t the kind of people who wanted a Yorkie. One’s ginormous and one’s little. You either want the big one or the little one, but you don’t want both,” she said.

Lexi and Giovanni were featured in the calendar. A young couple saw the pair and fell in love with them both. The dogs were adopted together and are now in a loving home.

In addition to finding homes for homeless pets, Special Pals is a full-service animal wellness clinic. They offer low-cost microchipping, vaccines, wellness checks, boarding and spay and neuter services to the public.

To purchase the 2019 Red White and Rescue Calendar visit www.redwhiteandrescue.com

To learn more about Special Pals Animal Shelter and their services, or to donate, visit www.specialpalsshelter.org or call (281) 579-7387.



Paul Torres from the Fulshear/Simonton Police Department spotlights ‘Rocco,’ a Rottweiler available for adoption through Special Pals Animal Rescue

Community involvement KEEPING FULSHEAR SAFE

by **TOM BEHRENS**

Fulshear is in the top five safest cities in Texas, according to Safewise. Safewise (www.safewise.com/blog/safest-cities-texas) releases the annual 50 safest cities in Texas report every year. Eighty-four percent of them report less than one violent crime per 1,000 people.

To identify the 50 cities with the best safety records, Safewise analysts looked at the number of violent crimes reported in the 2016 FBI Unified Crime Report. They also calculated the number of violent crime incidents per 1,000 people in each city. Analysts established population thresholds, and, in the event of a tie, property crimes were considered.

“Currently the crime rate in the City of Fulshear is minimal compared to surrounding communities,” said the Fulshear police officials in a statement on the official website page for the department (http://www.fulsheartexas.gov/government/police_department.php).

“Quality of life crimes are low due to the constant support the Fulshear Police Department receives from its citizens,” the statement continued. “We understand it is essential for the Fulshear Police Department to maintain a strong partnership with its citizens in order to continue its effort in minimizing crime in the City of Fulshear. This is the most valuable crime fighting tool on the market.”

Captain Mike McCoy, information officer with Fulshear Police Department, provided the following statistics. October 2018 statistics compared to October 2017 statistics show a six percent decrease in “calls for service” and a 60 percent decrease in traffic accidents.

“Calls for Service is any incident or concern in which you may call us for when you are in need of assistance,” said Capt. McCoy.

Traffic “contacts” had a 17 percent decrease compared to the month of October last year. The Department issued 267 citations and 569 warnings. “These numbers reflect our interest to educate and remind people of what their responsibilities are on the roadway and to make our community a safer place to drive, bike and walk,” said McCoy.

“Part one crimes” for the month of October 2018 compared to the month of October 2017 stayed the same with no homicides, no sexual assaults, no motor vehicle thefts, no aggravated assaults and no Arson. The Uniform Crime Report breaks down part one crimes into two categories-violent and property crimes.

Aggravated assault, forcible rape, murder and robbery are classified as violent while arson, burglary, larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft are classified as property crimes.

“Burglaries increased to three (homes under construction) and we had one robbery which was cleared as unfounded. Thefts

increased from four to nine," added McCoy.

"What we do have are what is called nuisance crimes ... DWI, possession of marijuana, controlled substances, unlawful carrying a weapon, a lot of the things you see on Fulshear Police.com. People drink too much, smoke too much weed and get caught. We don't have part one crimes, that makes us a very safe city. Murder, shootings ... thankfully, knock on wood, we don't have those kinds of things. We haven't had a murder here since 2012."

MUGSHOTS

Fulshear Police Department posts mugshots of violators of nuisance crimes on fulshearpolice.blogspot.com. "I've had people ask me to not put their mug shot up on the site. They don't mind going to jail, but they just don't want their picture up there. Their mugshots are a public record."

The Fulshear Police Department began posting the pictures a long time ago on social media, but then switched to the Crime Report in 2013. "I don't think many other police departments post pictures," said McCoy.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

"We want to have a partnership with the community," said McCoy. "When they see something suspicious, they call us. We preach that all the time. A phone call is free. If they see something that doesn't look right, give us a call, and we work together."

"There is a whole variable of things that the community does to help us. We also give back to the community by doing a lot of events ... Christmas for Tots, National Night Out, tours of the police station, police academy, presentations in the grade schools."

The Fulshear Police Foundation, a non-profit, helps the department financially. All money raised from memberships and events goes to the police department to accomplish special training or purchase additional equipment when the money is not in Police Department budget.

"We have everything we need; the city is very generous in what they give us, but there are times when we need extras. All the officers wanted a medical pack; we received the packs for every car. Recently, we started using body cameras. The foundation couldn't fund the whole package for the body cameras, but they did give us a high tech start on the cameras."

Kenny Seymour, chief of police, writes on the Department website: "I am committed to serving the community to the best of my ability. Our mission is to help make the City of Fulshear a

safe place to live and work by forming partnerships with its citizens and businesses. Our priority is not just writing a crime report after a crime has occurred; it is working with the community to prevent crime and to solve community problems. I invite you to become our partners in making your neighborhood a better place to live as our community continues to grow. The men and women of the Fulshear Police Department look forward to providing the community with unmatched excellence in law enforcement services."



Fulshear Police officer utilizing some of the equipment they have received.



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FULSHEAR BUSINESS

— *helping residents get into shape to start '19* —

by **VALERIE SWEETEN** | All Photos Courtesy of **Z ZONE FITNESS** in Fulshear

It's already January, and you have resolutions to keep when it comes to keeping a healthy lifestyle and staying fit. So, what's your plan to keeping the promise to yourself? Find a workout that suits your style with time, energy, and motivation. Working out isn't what it used to be where you head to the gym and jump on a treadmill.

Fitness seekers have more options than ever to get healthy.

According to TheChalkBoardMag.com's article, Top Fitness Trends for 2019, most people are looking to do a class that is 45 minutes or less. With this, the site reported that attendees are getting stronger, taking shorter classes, and showing up both early and late to get their workout done.

Boot camps and personal trainers, which tend to fit in anyone's schedule and can pop up nearly anywhere, are an exact fit to this



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trend.

Some of the highest-rated places in Fulshear offering an innovative approach to exercising include The Summit, CrossFit Fulshear and Z Zone Fitness Studio.

Jason Harley, owner and fitness trainer at The Summit Fitness Studio located at 8030 FM 359 in Fulshear, is a full-time instructor available to work with clients. There is also one other trainer available to assist.

Harley, who graduated in 2008 with a degree in exercise science from Abilene Christian University and began his personal training career, started working with Fulshear residents in 2013. The Summit Fitness Studio was then opened in 2016.

"We have personal training, buddy/couple training, and semi-private classes for up to five people," said Harley.

Their specialty is giving an individualized approach to fitness that is safe and progressive stated Harley.

"My clients are drawn to The Summit because here they see the results, their doctors are happy, and fitness is enjoyable again. People also like the clean and non-intimidating atmosphere that training in a 'boutique' gym setting provides," Harley said.

The draw of a boot camp is multi-faceted especially when it comes to working out with neighbors and friends in a relaxed atmosphere.

Exercise in this type of setting can typically include running or jogging, push-ups, sit-ups, and resistance training. The goal is exercising the entire body and improving all aspects of fitness. Additionally, they're done in a short period of time usually

requiring very little equipment. Most will use your own body weight as resistance.

Zaileth Escorcha of Z Zone Fitness in Fulshear said they host Bootcamp classes four days a week with two in the morning and two in the evening. There are also classes that complement the weekly workout such as Jumping Core, TRX and Aerial Hammock.

Z Zone Fitness is located at 11605 S Fry Rd, Suite 605 in Fulshear.

Escorcha explained their instructors are motivators that encourage, inspire, and are the spark that fires everyone in the room to burn calories and have fun. Their classes consist of 45-minute HIIT circuits (High Intensity Interval Training) and vary in length and number of stations.

"Our classes are always different and fun," Escorcha said. "Each class has a different format. We combine cardio with strength, and we use different tools like bender balls, medicine balls, wall balls, sand balls and kettlebells. There's tool free exercises to keep the body and the mind curious on the next challenge. We also do Benchmarks to assess members to see how their performance improves as they grow with us."

Attendees love Z Zone Fitness' approach to working out.

"We are more than Fitness Group classes. We are a philosophy behind the Z-WAY program. Z-WAY drives participants through a path to become not only healthier and stronger, but also committed to a better lifestyle. All members start with the White Band. The challenge is to become a Black Band Z-Fan," Escorcha said.



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MAYOR RESPONDS

— to water fee increase —

by **CLAIRE GOODMAN**



Mayor Aaron Groff discusses the North Fort Bend Water Authority's mandated rate increase at a Dec. 18 city council meeting.

In February of 2018, Fulshear residents saw an increase in their water bill of \$.30 per 1,000 gallons. In February of this year, residents will experience an additional \$.35 per 1,000 gallon increase in their bills, making the total cost \$3.65 per 1,000 gallons.

The announcement has frustrated residents wondering why the bills are suddenly increasing in such substantial increments and questioning whether or not the fees are necessary.

Mayor Aaron Groff understands the frustration. "No one wants to see an increase in water bills," he said. Groff acknowledged that in his own water bill he pays more money in fees than he does for the actual base rate.

It's only natural, Groff observed, for residents to see the increase in their bills and hold city council responsible for the fees, but the reason for increase is much more complicated than most people realize. "I want to assure residents that the city council has little choice but to approve the increase of this fee," he said.

In 1975, the state of Texas began to study the effects of using groundwater on the environment. By 1989, they concluded that

the use of groundwater was causing significant subsidence- or sinking - of the land. The only solution to the problem was to convert to surface water, which is sourced from natural bodies of water.

As a result, the state created the North Fort Bend Water Authority (NFBWA) to help local municipal entities like local MUDs convert Fort Bend from groundwater to surface water.

Groff said, "NFBWA encompasses approximately 141 square miles in Fort Bend County, and includes the City of Fulshear and more than eighty MUDs. The NFBWA, along with the Fort Bend Subsidence District, was created by the state of Texas to reduce subsidence in Fort Bend County and to deliver a long-term sustainable supply of water from sources other than groundwater to the water users within the NFBWA boundaries."

Unfortunately, bringing surface water into Fulshear homes is not cheap. There is no nearby surface water source, so Fulshear has to draw in water from Lake Houston or the Brazos River via 39 miles of pipe. And unlike ground water, which is generally safe to drink directly from the source, surface water is contaminated and must undergo a thorough treatment process.



Aaron Groff, mayor of Fulshear, responded to the confusion and frustration over the increase in water rates.

The state has mandated that by 2025, 60 percent of Fulshear's water supply must come from surface water. Failure to comply comes with a hefty price tag: the state will charge residents a "disincentive" fee of \$6.50 per 1,000 gallons if Fulshear continues to pull water from the ground.

Frustrating as the water bills are, there is nothing that city council can do to circumvent or allay the costs. "We truly do empathize, but city council has no say in this decision whatsoever," Groff said.

The increase in prices is unavoidable, but Groff noted that there are many things residents can do to keep their bills as low as possible. The NFBWA has an online resource called "Larry the Talking Sprinkler" that offers water conservation tips and incentives and rebates for water-conservation actions.

The most important thing to remember as bills continue to increase is the importance of water as a natural resource. "Water is an incredibly valuable resource, and because of our growth, we use a lot of it. The more we conserve, the more money we save, and the better it is for the environment," Groff said.

For information on water conservation and local rebates through the NFBWA, visit <https://talkingsprinkler.com/toolbox/>.

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NEW TACTICAL UNIFORMS

for Fort Bend County deputies

by **CLAIRE GOODMAN**

The shiny badges that are synonymous with law enforcement are about to be phased out for a few specialized groups of deputies in the Fort Bend County Constable 3rd Precinct. The standard deputy's uniforms are fine for patrol officers, but for tactical response teams like SWAT and narcotics, the bulky fabric and badges are impractical.

Constable Wayne Thompson of Precinct 3 explained, "The formal uniforms are not very practical for these special teams. Sometimes the deputies have to crawl around and get in small places, and the badges were constantly getting caught and snagged, and the material didn't have much give. These new uniforms are designed for performance."

While other divisions of law enforcement have performance-wear uniforms, the concept is new to most constable's offices. Precinct 3 is the only precinct in Fort Bend County that will be using them. "Constables are all elected officials, so we kind of operate individually. We work together, of course, but only our precinct will be getting the uniforms for now," Thompson said.

While the standard uniforms are made from a cotton blend, the new uniforms are made of a breathable performance and moisture-wicking fabric. The "badges" on the performance wear are actually patches that replicate the formal badges. The deputies are still identifiable, but the patches don't get caught when the officer has to climb into a tight space to search for contraband. "We kept finding that the badges were getting caught or tearing the uniforms, and they were just really impractical," Thompson added.

There are four precincts in Fort Bend County, but Precinct 3 is the largest. The precinct covers 272 square miles and serves 250,000 people across five cities. As such, Precinct 3 handles more narcotics and tactical calls than the other three precincts combined.

When a patrol officer calls in the narcotics team, the specially trained teams respond to the call in their new uniforms. "When they're searching a car for narcotics, sometimes they have to take the whole thing apart. Or if they're searching a property and

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people have hidden the narcotics somewhere, the deputies might end up under a crawl-space looking for things,” said Thompson.

The uniforms will also be worn by SWAT teams. With traditional uniforms, the bullet-proof vests may be worn on the inside or outside. The new uniforms will have vests on the outside only, which will also make them more comfortable. The material is also very light-weight: perfect for SWAT officers who are already laden with heavy equipment.

So far only Precinct 3 will be using the new uniforms. The other three constables precincts in Fort Bend County are not likely to adopt the same uniforms because only Precinct 3 has the high volume of narcotics and SWAT calls. “All the constables have different visions for their precincts, and these uniforms were part of my vision for Precinct 3,” Thompson said.



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Why Fulshear is A GREAT PLACE TO CALL HOME

by **TOM BEHRENS**

How many times have you asked these questions? "What do you want to do this weekend," or maybe, "Where can we go get some good barbecue," "Where can I get my car fixed?"

All good questions and many more are asked every day. Maybe you just opened a business, and you're wondering how to get the word out to community? Is there a place where you can get good, trustworthy information? Check out the Fulshear Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber of Commerce's are business organizations seeking to further their communities' collective interests.

Chambers of Commerce promote opportunities to raise the quality of life in a community, as their members prosper from such opportunities. These organizations — which typically represent diverse sectors of the community include business, non-profit, education, entertainment, education and health and government entities. By creating a healthy community culture, chambers of commerce ensure economic vitality and equitable prosperity, fulfilling its community's vision.

An example of what other community chamber of commerce activities around the country have done is the Billings, MT, Chamber of Commerce. It began work on a Trails Initiative in 2009. The goal was to develop the area's trail system for the economic and healthy community benefits that result from active transportation to work and school and for leisure. The Chamber was a Category 3 Winner, 2015 Chamber of the Year for their role

as a leader in the Billings Trails Committee.

The Fulshear-Katy Area Chamber of Commerce, located 29818 FM 1093 in Fulshear, exists to help its members realize their visions and achieve their goals. The chamber has received the Bronze Quill Award for its promotion of its members and community activities. The Fulshear-Katy Area Chamber of Commerce was awarded second-place as "Best in Texas" at the in Directories/Community Profile in Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives meeting.

The Fulshear-Katy Chamber of Commerce has grown from its creation in 2016 to close to 500 Chamber members; from automotive, contractors to country club to entertainment. There are job postings and business catalogs that provide information about members services and products.

"We aim to keep our organization flexible in order to inspire our members to do their best work," says the statement of purpose of the Fulshear Chamber of Commerce (www.fulshearkaty.com). "We strive to be the best possible partner to our members and to serve them to their complete and total satisfaction. By contributing and being a resource to the community and fostering connections between our members and the community, we will do our utmost to make the Fulshear-Katy Area a great place to grow, visit and do business."

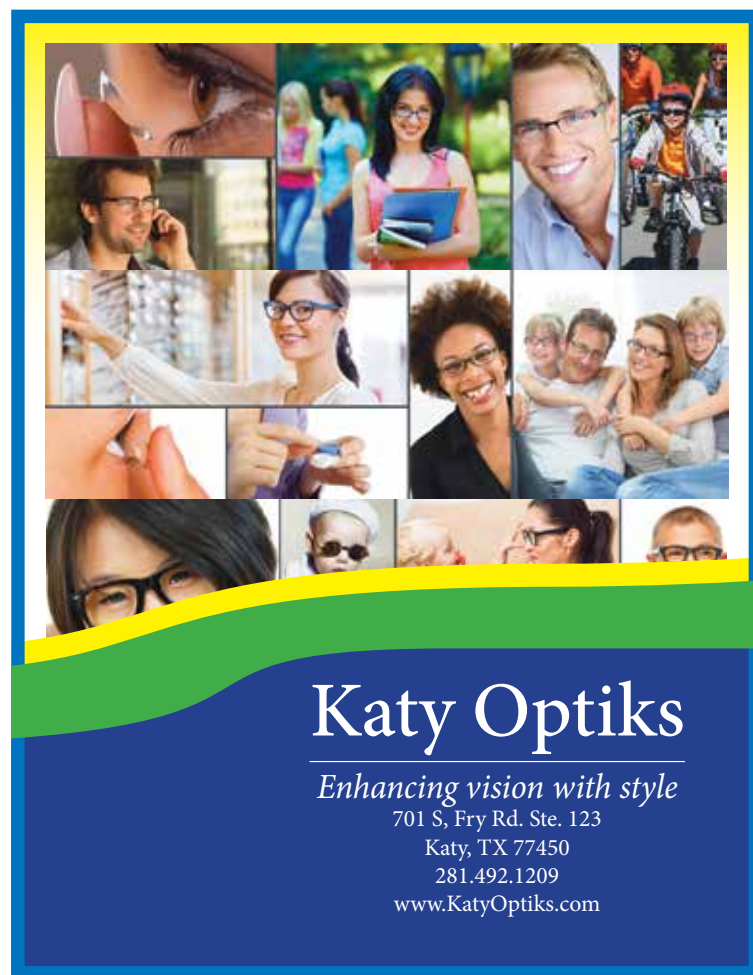
The function of the Fulshear-Katy Chamber of Commerce isn't just about promoting local businesses. The Chamber is a leader in promoting interesting and entertaining events throughout the year.



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The St. Patrick's Day Shamrock Shindig, Festival of Lights during the Christmas season are fun activities for the Fulshear community.

The Fulshear Shamrock Shindig is an annual event located in downtown Fulshear, at the crossroads of FM 359 and FM 1093.

The festive day begins with a parade. The World Championship Bass-Carrington Irish dancers have been featured, followed by three rotating stage performances by Godfrey's Rangers, Richard Kean Bagpipers, and the McTeggert Irish Dancers. Some other highlights include a petting zoo, face-painting, green manicures, moon bounces, 30 plus vendors, food trucks and a real Leprechaun. This is family-friendly event with entertainment for all ages.

The Festival of Lights last year included a tree-lighting ceremony, a parade with floats and marching band.

The event is going to kick off with a parade with floats, followed by a band. Other



Festivals, like the one for St. Patrick's Day, is one of the reasons Fulshear is considered a charming community.



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LOCAL EVENTS

activities included music by Jus Coz, a live Nativity scene, a snow area for children and a 2,000-square-foot synthetic ice-skating rink and closed out with a firework show.

The Fort Bend Herald newspaper quoted Amy Norvell of the Fulshear chamber as saying, "Santa will arrive during the parade to visit the children's area to hear what everyone wants for Christmas." There is food, crafts, clothing and jewelry. Don McCoy, chamber president described the Festival of Lights as a great, family-friendly event and a really incredible way to show up for the community.

The Annual Fulshear Freedom Fest 4th of July Celebration takes place in downtown Fulshear.

There are food trucks, vendors, activities for kids and a spectacular fireworks show. "We think we have one of the best free family events in Fort Bend County," said Norvell.

Chamber members hosts Memorial Day events, Gumbo Cook Off, and always a big favorite, the Fulshear-Simonton Texas Opry. The Opry is described as a day filled with music, fun and entertainment for the entire family. Past entertainers included great music from Mary Sarah, Pauline Reese, Freddie Pate and Moses Rangle. The event is held in the comfort of the state-of-the-art Churchill Fulshear High School Theatre.

As the city of Fulshear grows, the Chamber has grown, reported as the fastest Growing Chamber in Texas listing 100's of business categories. There are monthly Chamber meetings and free breakfast, monthly Chamber networking mixers, Grand Openings and Rope (ribbon) Cuttings,

business growth seminars, and from time to time influential guest speakers.

For more information about an event or membership, contact Amy Norvell at amy@fulshearkaty.com or call 832-600-3221.

The Festival of Lights is a big event for the community.



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