



Community Services

"Adding value to the community through people, programs and facilities."

Annual Report 2014

Accomplishments

- Implemented new library inventory system, Apollo.
- Library design finalized and construction specifications completed.
- Texas Parks and Wildlife awarded Fireman's Park the Legacy Award.
- Texas Public Pool Council awarded the BBAC 2014 Class III Agency of the Year.
- Texas Public Pool Council awarded the BBAC 2014 Safety Award.
- Hosted ASA tournament.
- Began Wayfinding Program

Blue Bell Aquatic Center

- 2014 BBAC Visits = 66,434
- Kid Fish Program = 453 participants
- 2nd Grade Water Safety = 500 participants
- Private Parties = 30
- Learn To Swim Participants:

Water Babies = 69
Group swim lessons = 276
Private lessons = 117
Junior guard = 10

One Team

The City of Brenham Community Services Division adds value and quality of life services to the community through its people, programs and facilities. Each year the staff of the Community Services Division seeks to meet the needs and expectations of the community through its programs and activities, and 2014 was another year of excellence for this team! Community Services includes the Blue Bell Aquatic Center, Community Programs and Marketing (formerly Recreation), Main Street and the Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library. In October of 2014, the City of Brenham formally unified these departments with similar missions, values and goals under the leadership of one director, Wende Ragonis. The focus for the Community Services team in 2014 was long-term planning, process efficiencies and resource management.

Blue Bell Aquatic Center (BBAC)

The BBAC's commitment to excellence in 2014 gained the recognition of the Texas Public Pool Council who awarded two awards to the BBAC for this past year's achievements. The BBAC was named *2014 Agency of the Year* for its overall excellence, and it was awarded the *2014 Safety Award* for teaching water safety skills to 2nd graders in the community through its Water Safety program. By the end of 2014, the BBAC had welcomed over 66,000 visitors with award winning aquatic programming and its safe fun aquatic environment.

To keep up with the needs of its visitors, several facility enhancements were made to the BBAC during 2014. The exterior deck around the Leisure Pool was expanded by 1000 sq. ft. to accommodate more picnic tables and a canopy, and the original ice cream sandwich was refurbished and added to the popsicle trail.

The BBAC also became the "Park Central" and first point of contact for community needs relating to parks, community programs (recreation) and aquatics in 2014. While recreational participants at the BBAC represented 45 percent of the total recreation programming attendance in the City in 2014, the remaining 55 percent of participation was split: 34 percent- sports tourism, 17 percent - carousel and facility rentals and 4 percent -non-aquatic programs and special events.

Recreation program registrations such as Little Diggers, Junior Gloves and Spring Training Camp and the park facility rentals are scheduled through the staff at the BBAC. All of these registrations and rental reservations saw an increase in 2014.

Community Programs and Marketing

- Program Participants:
Adult Slow Pitch Softball = 160
Junior Gloves Softball = 30
Little Digger Volleyball = 66
Spring Training Camp = 40
- Special Event Participants:
Movies in the Park = 3,157
*movies shown = 6
Easter Egg-stravaganza = 681
(twice the size of previous year)
Amphitheater Performance = 125
"Much Ado about Nothing"
Christmas Lighted Parade = 4500
- ASA Tournament = 640

Lighted Christmas Parade Winners:

Best Overall – Brenham Vet Hospital/Pet Resort with honorable mention given to True Blue Animal Rescue.

Best Parade Theme – Brenham COP/CPAAA with honorable mention given to Grace Community Fellowship.

Most Original – Germania Insurance with honorable mention given to Brenham School of Dance.

Best Lights – First Baptist Church School with honorable mention given to Kolkhorst Petroleum.

Best Spirit of the Season – St. Paul's CDS.

Under the leadership of Tammy Jaster, the BBAC strives for excellence in pool safety, aquatic programming and customer service. Staff is encouraged to reach milestones in their own professional development and seek out the necessary skills to operate and manage a safe facility for the community. Over the years, Tammy has earned and still maintains certifications as an Aquatics Facility Operator (AFO), Certified Pool Operator (CPO), Lifeguard Instructor (LGI) and a Water Safety Instructor (WSI). In 2014, Robyn Bentke earned her Certified Pool Operator (CPO) and Lifeguard Instructor (LGI) certifications. Kevin Boggus, who is now housed full time at the BBAC, holds a CPO and a Water Safety Instructor certification, and Darrell Meyer holds a CPO as well. Having a well-equipped facility and trained staff is critical to the continued tradition of excellence that is the BBAC.

Community Programs and Marketing (CPM)

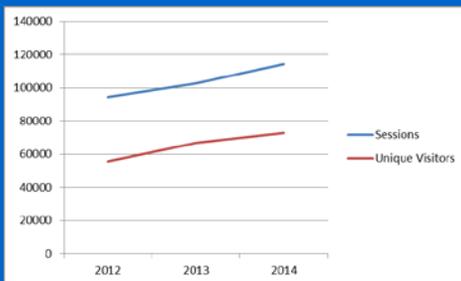
The Recreation department was renamed the Community Programs and Marketing department in 2014 to more accurately reflect its areas of responsibility. The lead for this department is Crystal Locke, and she manages community programs, festivals and annual events such as the Lighted Christmas Parade, Movies in the Park and the Easter Egg Hunt. In addition, this department coordinates grant administration and marketing for the Parks and Community Services departments, and markets tourism to promote an economic impact within the City's park system and the downtown historic district.

With these dynamic responsibilities, 2014 had the Community Programs team seeking out opportunities to enhance efficiencies. Staff turned to strategic partnerships with local business and other agencies to offer the community recreational programming. Partner such as the Blinn Buccaneer baseball, Brenham ISD and the Boys and Girls Club of Washington County provided volunteers for hosting sports camps and events for the community. Many local business provided sponsorships for the popular Movie in the Park summer series which help to fund these free community events. IN 2014, the City sponsored its first live theatre performance at the Amphitheatre by partnering with the Navasota Theatre Alliance. City hosted community programs, festivals and special events would not be possible without the commitment of the community volunteers and business partners.

To ensure staff continues to program for the changing needs of the community, City staff and the Parks Advisory Board began the process of developing a long-range strategic plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces. The City and the Parks Advisory Board partnered with Texas State University's Dr. Jo An Zimmermann to assess demographics, host community input meetings, and evaluate the City's existing park and recreation program inventory for input into the master plan. To further aid in decision making, the City took part in the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) benchmarking system, so staff would have access to financial tools specific to parks and recreation for

Marketing with the Website

The website which is managed by Kevin Boggus, has seen a steady increase in web sessions and new unique visitors since 2012 which means more people are coming to the website for information regarding the City and its services. Of these sessions approximately 16 percent are from addresses outside of Texas.



Main Street

- Recognized as National Main Street Program.
- Expanded Local History Day to include local 7th graders.
- Wayfinding vendor partner selected through a Request for Quote process.
- Third Annual Uptown Swirl Wine Walk
1,000+ glasses sold
27 downtown merchants participated
- Tenth Annual Summer Concert Series
- First Annual Brew Step
350+ glasses sold
- Expanded Local History Day to include area 7th graders.
150 volunteers logging 1,100 hours

benchmarking standards. The Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Master plan was completed in 2015 and represents the parks, recreation and open spaces vision of the community for the next 10 years.

Sports tourism represents 34 percent of the overall organized recreational activities in the City. There were 32 tournaments hosted in Brenham during 2014 which brought almost 500 teams to the community. With these teams, approximately 22,350 visitors came to Brenham which brought an estimated economic impact of \$701,306. In addition to these teams, Brenham hosted the city's first Texas ASA youth state softball tournament in June 2014. The City partnered with private businesses such as area hotels, restaurants, and retail establishments to ensure that guests enjoyed their visit to the community. This three day event brought more than 640 visitors to Brenham with an estimated economic impact of approximately \$125,000.

Whether focused on community events or hosting events that attract outside visitors to the community, the CPM team seeks to provide quality recreation and leisure activities for all to enjoy.

Main Street

The Main Street program under the leadership of Jennifer Eckermann celebrated its fifteenth anniversary in 2014 thanks to the many community supporters and the City of Brenham's commitment to economic development and historic preservation in the downtown district. The City of Brenham was accredited as a National Main Street city in 2014 for its work guided by the "Ten Criteria Report" which judges categories like broad-based support of the program, historic preservation ethic, volunteer commitments and a dynamic work plan. The Main Street Program includes more than 45 volunteers who served on the board and various committees. These community supporters continue to be committed to the City's downtown revitalization efforts through the Main Street Program, as they logged more than 2,000 volunteer hours in 2014. In addition to the community support through volunteer hours, the private sector reinvested approximately \$1,115,460 and public agencies represented a reinvestment of \$35,000 into the downtown district.

Main Street hosted several events which stimulated a positive economic impact for the downtown area and local hoteliers in 2014. Main Street kicked off its first signature event in 2014 with its third annual Uptown Swirl Wine Walk, and then hosted the popular Hot Nights, Cool Tunes Summer Concert Series which celebrated its tenth year as a downtown event. A new event in 2014 was the Texas Brew Step which was held in October. Building on the success of the Swirl, and working with the downtown brewery, Brazos Valley Brewing Company, other Texas breweries were invited to sample their brews in participating downtown merchants. With approximately 350 glasses sold, the first-time event was deemed a success, and plans are to include this event in Main Street's annual event line-up. In addition to these signature events, Main Street hosted two downtown

Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library

- Library Circulations (items checked out in 2014)= 66,287
- Items added to Collection = 3417
- New Patron Accounts = 1482
- Percentage of Collection in Temporary Location at City Hall:
 - Large Print Collection – 90%*
 - Fiction Collection- 80%*
 - Non-Fiction Collection (including items previously located in genealogy collection) – 60%*
 - Teen Collection – 60%*
 - Children’s Collection – 90%*
 - Media/DVD/Periodicals – 100%*
- Genealogy Collection of approximately 1,250 items on loan to the Brenham Heritage Museum.

promotional contests, the Spring Egg Art Walk and Scarecrow Extravaganza, which are popular with many members of the community. These events not only draw groups of people to the downtown area, but also help to decorate downtown for the busy spring and fall seasons.

In an effort to bring the historic buildings to life in the downtown district, Main Street Brenham again led a core team of partners including Brenham ISD, the Brenham Heritage Museum, the Heritage Society of Washington County and Washington on the Brazos State Park Association, to reenact the history of downtown and the community. Local actors dress in period appropriate costume and told the “tall tales” of Brenham folklore and early history for area 4th graders through the Local History Day program. In 2014, this program was expanded by one day to include the community’s 7th graders in both public and private schools.

Main Street wrapped up 2014, by selecting a firm to design the community’s wayfinding signage program. The need for wayfinding signage was identified in the Downtown Brenham Master Plan which the City Council adopted in 2012. In 2014, the committee was formed to begin the wayfinding program process. This committee worked with the City’s purchasing team to develop a Request for Quote, interview firms and ultimately contract with fd2s, a design firm from Austin. A wayfinding design plan will be complete in 2015.

Main Street’s focus in each and every year is to bring people into the downtown area and generate economic activity for the district while preserving the history that makes it unique. 2014 was another successful year of accomplishing that goal.

Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library (NCRML)

2014 was the year of change for NCRML. This change was a necessary response to the meet the needs and expectations of the community. Libraries across the country including the NCRML are evolving to meet the demands of the modern patron by offering digital resources and technology services all while maintaining the traditional library offerings. The year began with the implementation of a new library software system called Apollo to simplify and improve the overall operations of the library. The benefits of this system to Library patrons are the addition of eBooks, digital library resources, and the ability for patrons to customize their account settings. The benefits to staff are a simplified cataloguing process and better management of inter-library loans, circulation inventory and patron accounts. As the year progressed, it became clear that the facility housing the NCRML was impaired and required modernization, so the decision was made to temporarily relocate library operations to City Hall. During this temporary relocation, the modernization of the existing facility was thoughtfully designed and planned with the guidance of the Library Advisory Board and Komatsu Architecture. The anticipated completion for the modernization of the facility is the summer of 2016.

Contact Us

<http://cityofbrenham.org/>

<http://downtownbrenham.com/>

979-337-7250 BBAC / Park Central / Community Programs

979-337-7201 Library

The relocation to City Hall added a challenge to Library staff in 2014, but as the year progress the staff worked together as a team under the direction of the Library Supervisor Andria Heiges. The annual Summer Reading Program, “*Fizz, Bang, Boom*” with over 300 participants was hosted at Hohlt Park. The Library received a \$5000 grant from the Edge Initiative which is a program funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The NCRML used these funds to purchase Chrome Books and e-readers for patron use. The Library also made significant investments in on-line databases. With a Library card in good standing and an on-line Library account, patrons can now look through various educational and workforce related databases. This year *Tumblebooks* which is online children’s books and *Mango Languages* which is an online language learning tool were added. You may access Library information at the website <http://cityofbrenham.org/library/index.php>.

The Library hosted a “Food for Fines” program where food was collected in lieu of paid library fines. The Library collected 225lbs of non-perishable food. The Library wrapped up 2014 with a Christmas family story night with a special appearance from Santa Claus.

Looking to 2015

2015 promises to be another exciting year for Community Services as staff diligently works to add value to the community by continually assessing the community’s dynamic needs and building partnerships within the community to meet those needs for *all* that are humbly served by this team.