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Pictured are key players in the creation of the Horseshoe Creek Hiking Trail, representing many who were involved (left to rt.): Park Committee Chairman Michael Widler, former HSB Mayor Bob Lambert, President HSB Corp Sam Tarbet, Eileen Hurd and her daughter Donna Sugg, Resort Vice Chairman Ron Mitchell and HSB Mayor Steve Jordan.

HSB's Horseshoe Creek Hiking Trail Opens

by Linda Lambert

The new Horseshoe Creek Hiking Trail is open, thanks to the persistent efforts of many Horseshoe Bay residents, but it would not exist without the vision and generosity of Wayne Hurd and his wife Eileen. On Tuesday, November 29, 2011, Mrs. Hurd attended the Horseshoe Bay City Council meeting with the exciting news that she would donate 50 acres of land to the City. This unique property follows Horseshoe Creek from the HSB Mausoleum down to Hwy. 2147 near the water plant. Area hikers have been trekking this land for many years, but it was a very rugged hike. After years of planning and grant applications, a real hiking trail exists. It involves some walking over rocks and sloping areas, and hikers will get a real feeling of Hill Country nature as they walk through wooded areas with the soothing sounds of Horseshoe Creek bubbling up out of limestone rock or rushing along, depending on recent rainfall. Other trail highlights include a panoramic view of HSB all the way to the Lighthouse, a small boulder field, and abundant wildlife. Directions to the 2 1/4 mile trail are at the end of this article.

Eileen and her late husband Wayne Hurd envisioned the Horseshoe Creek area as a park for hikers, picnickers and general family use and talked about it often before his death in October 2011. Wayne Hurd (1923-2011) and his cousin Norman Hurd (1921-2002) were the original developers of

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Strong Local Sales Tax Revenues

By Jodi Lehman

All but one local municipality posted increases in sales tax revenues distributed in December 2016 over receipts received in December 2015. Only the City of Llano showed a monthly dip, receiving \$84,748 in sales tax distributions this month, down 1% over the \$85,610 it received in December 2015. But through the first 11 months of this calendar year, Llano has received \$1,030,241 in sales tax allocations, up 6.15% over the same period last year.

All other area municipalities' sales tax revenues were up this period as well as year to date. Sunrise Beach posted the highest percentage in monthly sales tax increase, receiving \$2,797 in December 2016, a 33.99% increase over December 2015. Sunrise Beach's year to date sales tax revenues are 13.17% ahead of last year. Cottonwood Shores posted the second highest increase in monthly allocation, receiving \$14,472 in December, an increase of 30.35% over December 2015, with a year to date increase of 10.30%.

Horseshoe Bay received \$92,608 in sales tax remittances in December, a 14.96% increase over the \$80,555 it received for the same period last year. This strong showing pushed HSB's sales tax receipts for calendar year 2016 to date up 6.78% higher than for the same period in 2015.

The City of Burnet took in \$170,210 in sales tax remittances in December, a 6.89% increase over last December, and is 7.06% ahead of last year in year to date sales tax collections.

Marble Falls received \$605,439 in sales tax revenues this month, a 5.18% increase over December 2015 remittances. Marble Falls' year to date sales tax receipts of \$7,886,178 are up 6.19% over 2015.

The statewide average remittance for municipalities in December 2016 was 0.21% higher than the same period last year. Year to date, sales tax remittances are up 1.03% statewide.

December's local sales tax allocations mostly reflect sales made during October. Merchants remit sales tax revenues to the Texas Comptroller the month after the sales are made, and the Comptroller distributes the tax to cities during the first week of the following month. Monthly distributions can also be affected by adjustments from prior periods.

See Sales Tax Continued on Page 8



A Graduation ceremony for Horseshoe Bay's charter Citizens' Academy was held on December 8, 2016, the first session was comprised of eleven citizens that completed the 9 week academy. Participants were educated as to the inner workings of City government as well as given the opportunity to meet City staff that strive to keep things running smoothly. Pictured are front row seated l to r: Barbara Hughes, Claire Ploeger, Peggy Jordan, Sandra Moravitz, standing l to r: Billy Lapham, Raymond Ploeger, Gary Gum, Sam Morrison, Jerry Clinesmith, Lee Peterson and Kenneth Lindgren. The next Citizens' Academy will begin on February 2, 2017, seats are limited to 15 so early enrollment is encouraged. Please visit the City website for application and information. www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov

Emergency management gets big TCEQ grant

By John Verser

Officials with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality told those seeking funds from a one-time grant to "think big."

Ron Anderson, the county's assistant director for emergency management, did just that, and the county received a hefty reward through its Local Emergency Planning Committee. The county was awarded over \$92,000 in grant funds for emergency management projects, Anderson told commissioners at Monday's regularly scheduled meeting.

"This was a one-time opportunity that they said dream big, ask for whatever projects that you can," he said.

The TCEQ offered a total of \$4.4 million in grant funds throughout the state. From 254 counties, it awarded over 50 grants, including the one from Llano County.

Anderson said the \$4.4 million offered to counties was a one-time payout, and the agency will offer just about \$200,000 statewide per year after that.

The county applied for four projects, and the TCEQ approved three of them for a total of \$92,662.80.

The first project approved was funds to purchase and install a backup generator for the county's office of emergency management and emergency operations center.

The county had funds in the budget for the generator, but now it will not have to use those funds for that purpose.

The second project approved was for the purchase of radios for the department. One will go in the department's vehicle, while two will be hand held radios for the OEM.

The third project approved was for various equipment for the OEM, including a 36-inch plotter printer, computers, desks, dry erase boards, large screens and more.

"If I had to do it over again, and money wasn't an object, this is what I would want, and TCEQ gave us everything," Anderson said.

See Commissioners Continued on Page 8

Armed Forces Honor Garden Underway

Detail Presentation Set for December 18

In a December 7 ceremony to memorialize Pearl Harbor Day Wednesday, gold-colored shovels broke ground on St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church's Armed Forces Honor Garden in Horseshoe Bay.

A presentation giving details of what will be in the garden and the opportunities to donate various memorials will take place in the Finn Family Life Center on the parish grounds at 11:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 18. The public, as well as the parish, is encouraged to attend.

When completed, the garden will hold a water fountain emblazoned with memorial stars, a restive area with memorial plaques, and a walkway of paving stones, to honor those who have served in the Armed Forces or made the ultimate sacrifice.

The focal point of the garden is the "Lest We Forget" statue of Jesus Christ embracing a U.S. soldier.

"I guess we can all find our own meaning for this statue and this garden, but for me its about forgiveness and grati-

See Honor Garden Continued on Page 2



Breaking ground Wednesday, Dec. 7, at the site of the Armed Forces Honor Garden at St. Paul the Apostle Church are, from left, Dick Heilman, committee chair; St. Paul's pastor Father Rubén Patiño, CSP; Tom Classen, owner of Westway Custom Builders of Horseshoe Bay; and Brent Baker, architect, managing principal with Studio | 16:19 of Round Rock.

Around the Bay



Special Honors: Star Republican Women honored retiring Texas Senator Troy Fraser and his wife Linda at SRW's Christmas Luncheon. From left are: 2017 SRW President Gennie Ward, Linda Fraser, 2015-2016 President Mary Lou Kromer and Senator Fraser. SRW honored the Frasers by contributing \$500 to the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, a nationally acclaimed hospital that treats children with orthopedic issues no cost to the patient.



2017 Star Republican Women Officers were installed into office at SRW's Christmas luncheon on December 13 at the Escondido Golf & Lake Club. From left are: Emily Tobin (2nd Vice President), Caron Drake (Treasurer), Gennie Ward (President), Denise Rives (1st Vice President) and Kathy Hussey (Secretary).



Take a walk along the Horseshoe Creek Trail and encounter the natural wonders not far from your back door.

Hiking Trail Continued from Page 1

Horseshoe Bay. Throughout the last 40 years, Wayne and Eileen have donated land to St. Paul the Apostle Church, The Church at Horseshoe Bay and many parcels to the Horseshoe Bay POA as the needs arose. One of the most notable of these properties is the Horseshoe Bay Mausoleum, which has a peaceful atmosphere beside Horseshoe Creek with winding paths and stone benches.

One of Wayne's favorite pastimes was hiking all over HSB, looking for stray golf balls while his dog Angus swam in flowing creeks. Tidy racks in his garage contained over 1,000 balls. He had a short hiking trail cleared below the Mausoleum so hikers could walk along the creek, complete with signage. That trail leads into the extended one that opened this week. The city honored Eileen Hurd's suggestion that the short road from Thanksgiving Mt. road to the lower trailhead be designated as "Wayne's Trail."

The new Horseshoe Creek Trail epitomizes everything that first attracted the Hurds to HSB's natural beauty. When our area has had adequate rain, waterfalls, pools and springs appear along the rocky creek. There is a small grotto, abundant wildlife and a profusion of wildflowers in the spring. The City spent \$27,000 toward the trail. In order to complete the planned route, a parcel of land near the Mausoleum was donated by the Horseshoe Bay Property Owners' Association and the HSB Resort also donated land near the water plant on Hwy. 2147.

HSB resident Michael Widler has been chief organizer for the trail plan for the past five years. He has an extensive background in trail building and maintenance due to his 30 years with Colorado Division of Parks and Recreation. "On a difficulty scale of 1 to 3, 3 being the hardest, I would give this one a 2 to 2 1/2," said Widler.

"Once Eileen generously donated land for a hiking trail, we began applying for grant

money. It took three tries, but in 2016 we were finally awarded a \$110,000 grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife. We had to meet stringent guidelines to qualify for the grant." Over the past five years, many studies of the property were conducted by various agencies. Texas State University conducted an archeological study of the area and found Indian cooking mounds that are between 7,200 and 9,000 years old, which the trail avoids. Texas Parks and Wildlife inspected the property for endangered bird species. 500 feet of the trail is four feet wide and handicapped accessible.

Trail building began in September of 2016 and was completed the second week in October. A group of youth from Texas Conservation Corps stayed in the HSB campground and blazed the trail, trimming and clearing the path. "There is a lot of rock in the trail area, and they chipped out holes for signage by hand with axes and sledge hammers," said Widler. They also built several benches along the way out of cedar logs.

TCC youth are aged 18 to 25, receive a living allowance, and are eligible for an education award at the end of the service term. Participants also receive training in technical and work skills as well as civic engagement and leadership skills. They travel all over the United States where needed, fighting fires, working in flooded areas and helping out in other disaster zones.

"We had a total of 35 young adults work on the trail this year and they put in a total of 3440 hours of labor to get to where we are today. They will be back in the spring to finish a few things, see how the trail stands up this winter and put in some more benches," said Widler.

Where to park: From Hwy. 2147, turn right onto Thanksgiving Mt., drive to the top and turn right onto Hi Ridge. Pass the Church At Horseshoe Bay and turn left on Mountain Dew. After about 1/2 mile, look to the right

for the Mausoleum sign. Follow the Mausoleum road another 1/2 mile to the entrance. There is parking at the Mausoleum. There is also limited parking on Wayne's Trail, on the right side of Thanksgiving Mt. Road just as you leave Hwy. 2147, making it possible for groups to park a car at each end for a one way hike. There are information signs and excellent maps at both ends of the trail, which is over two miles in length including a few short loops.

As you begin the trail, take time to walk through the HSB Mausoleum. The stone and granite structure, built in the 1970's, contains both crypts and niches. Eileen Hurd added her well known humor to the day when asked for a comment to the crowd gathered at the Mausoleum entrance. "During the time the Mausoleum was being constructed, our dog Angus died. Workers were asked to bury him in the

floor. As they were digging the hole one of the workers commented, 'Hurry up, guys, before Wayne's Longhorn steer dies!'"

Eileen Hurd grew up in rural England, where exploring the countryside was a common pastime. "We walked everywhere. I remember hiding behind hedgerows on the way to school when farmers passed by with their cow herds. I walked the restructured Horseshoe Creek Trail recently and it is lovely. I was pleased that a path has been cleared, but the trail blazers kept the area's natural look. There are several rocky and steep areas so take a walking stick!"

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