



The Webb County Link

A Publication Of The Webb County Public Information Office

November 2015

In This Issue

- * Columbarium Unveiling Pg 1
- * Veteran's Day Celebration Pg 1
- * A Bear-y Comforting Gift Pg 2
- * Sweater Giveaway Pg 2
- * Pct. 1 Luncheon Pg 2
- * Turkey Giveaway Pg 2
- * Webb County Adopts Balanced Budget Pg 3
- * National Eating Healthy Day Pg 5
- * Blood & Bodily Fluids Training Pg 5
- * Community Center Event Roundup Pg 5
- * Champion Honored Pg 6
- * Head Start Proclamations Pg 6
- * Youth Food Challenge Pg 6

Important Dates

- * 12/07 Jury Duty
- * 12/14 Jury Duty
- * 12/14 Commissioners Court Meeting 9:00am
- * 12/15 New Employee Orientation
- * 12/24 Christmas Eve County Offices Closed
- * 12/25 Christmas Day County Offices Closed
- * 12/28 Commissioners Court Meeting 9:00am

Columbarium Unveiling



Webb County, City of Laredo, Fernando A. Salinas Trust and local Veterans came together for the unveiling of the City Cemetery Columbarium. As space for Laredo Veterans decreased rapidly at the City of Laredo Cemetery, one local veteran found a solution to extend space available. Jesus Segovia, Commander, Laredo Veterans Coalition, found the solution in Columbariums, structures designed to hold to the urn filled with the cremated ashes of veterans. Segovia first approached the City of Laredo, who pledged \$9,500 to the project. Webb County Commissioners Court provided \$8,500 and Fernando A. Salinas Trust pledged \$9,000 to help facilitate the project. Congratulations on this great project and thank you to all those who supported this cause!

Veteran's Day Celebration

In observance of Veteran's Day, Webb County Judge Tano Tijerina hosted a merienda for all Webb County veterans. Joined by the Commissioners Court, Judge Tijerina



thanked the veterans for all the love, dedication, and sacrifice they gave to this great country. The event was end-capped by the presentation of a video slideshow that highlighted the many heroes that called and still call Webb County home.

A Bear-y Comforting Gift



In an effort to bring comfort to thousands of children, the Webb County Sheriff's Office distributed stuffed animals to other first responders and agencies. Thanks to the community's outpour of support, the W.C.S.O. is able to donate stuffed animals to other local first responders and agencies. Agencies that received the donation include the Laredo Police and Fire Department, Department of Public Safety, Webb County Fire Department, SCAN and Casa de Misericordia. The stuffed animals collected are given to children who have experienced a traumatic event as a result of a crime or natural disaster. The sole purpose is to ensure these children are comforted all while aiming to bring a smile to their face.

Sweater Giveaway

In the spirit of sharing and to give blessings, Judge Monica Z. Notzon and the 111th District Court Staff held their Annual Sweater Giveaway at Leyendecker Elementary School, presenting the 1st Grade classes with sweaters, a book, and a goodie bag. The Judge and her staff strive to find ways to give back to the community and one of the things that they love to do and be part of is giving back to children. The sweater giveaway is one of the events the Judge and her staff really enjoy and they look forward to it every year. This the 4th year the 111th District Court has had the pleasure of hosting this event.



Pct. 1 Thanksgiving Luncheon

Participants of all Precinct 1 community centers attended a Thanksgiving Luncheon in Mirando City, hosted by Commissioner Frank Sciaraffa and staff. The precinct one staff and volunteers worked hard throughout the event to serve turkey and the works to about 100 attendees at the EJ Salinas Community Center Thanksgiving Luncheon.



Turkey Giveaway

Commissioner John Galo began the Thanksgiving season with special gifts for local citizens. Commissioner Galo and staff visited several different schools and living homes for the elderly and gifted out turkeys. Commissioner Galo sponsored the giveaway in appreciation for Webb County citizens and in light of the holiday spirit.



Webb County Adopts Balanced Budget

After many months of analyzing, calculating, and deciphering financial figures by Webb County's new budget officers, the Webb County Commissioners Court has adopted a balanced budget for fiscal year 2015-2016. The county's fiscal year begins on October 1st and ends September 30th.

Work on the new budget started in May after members of Commissioners Court named Lalo Uribe and Leroy Medford the new budget officers and assigned them the task of coming up with a budget that was not only fair and balanced, but also provided the most value to the constituents of Webb County.

Budget packets were prepared for and sent to each department. With the budget packets as a launching point, departments requested funding based on current operational needs, capital needs, and program changes needed to support their operations. In preparing their budget, departments have to work within not only the confines of county policy, but also emerging state and federal laws that could potentially affect their operations. For example, a new Texas truancy law, that took effect in September, is just one example of how outside factors play into the creation and development of a department's budget.

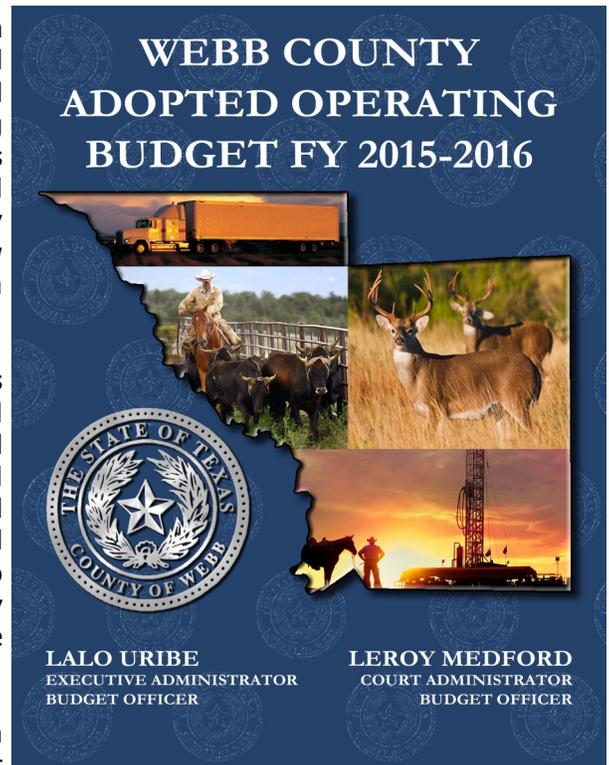
Once all budget packets were returned, the new budget officers began their task in earnest, looking at each department's current and previous budgets and identifying areas where the county could potentially save money. Even though they had the cooperation and support of the various county departments, the budget officers still had a daunting task ahead of them. The possibility of mineral devaluations in the oil and gas industry posed a serious threat to revenue projections for the upcoming years. A hard look into every request and line item would be needed in order to ensure that the county would continue working efficiently.

"We looked at each department's budget and met with each department head," said Lalo Uribe, "During those meetings, we went line item by line item to see if any adjustments could be made to save."

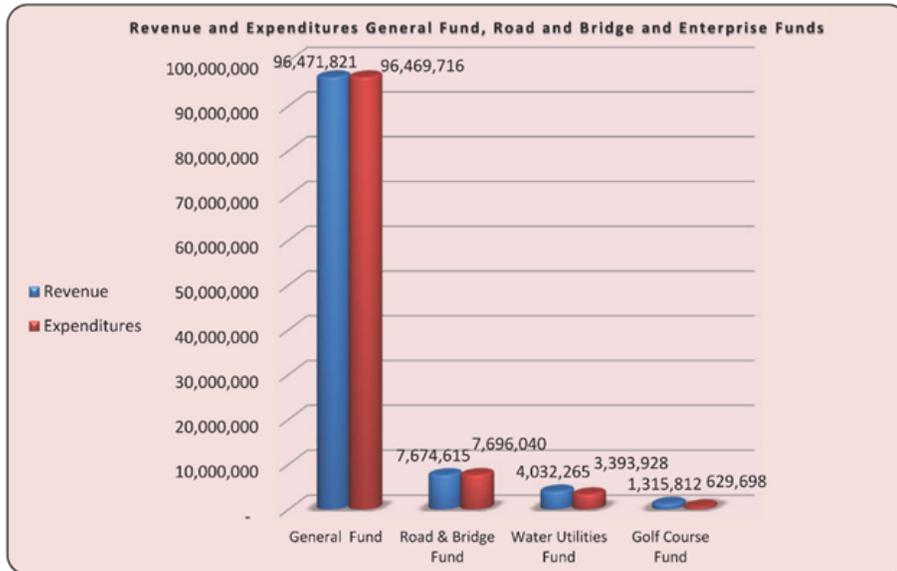
In essence, Webb County is bound by and dependent on outside factors when planning its budget. The near \$97 million budget is fed by property and sales tax collections, and fines and fees imposed by the various departments among others. The largest contributor to the county's budget is the collection of property taxes. Every year, the Webb County appraisal district has the gargantuan task of valuing all taxable property in Webb County. This year's value came in at an astonishing \$19,638,000,000. While the number is indeed large, the county only collects 0.414700 per \$100. With that number figured, the county has planned to receive approximately \$78,995,621, allowing for a 3% delinquency. The property valuation came as a blessing to the county since original forecasts had projected a loss of over \$4 million for fiscal year 2015-2016.

Though the specter of dramatically decreased revenues had dissipated, the budget officers still needed to find the right balance between the needs of a growing county and a limited budget. To this end, a dramatic, but needed, measure had to be implemented. In past years, in an effort to maintain organizational tranquility and to gratify constituency, it was accepted that budget balancing required the general fund reserves to provide the extra money needed to continue running. This past practice placed the county in a dangerous slope since slowly eating away at the reserves could affect not only the county's credit ratings, but would have also prevented the county from reacting properly should an unforeseen emergency occur. To combat rampant requests, the budget officers proposed a much stricter and inflexible budget. A stark example of this mandate was the approval of only four personnel slots out of the 83 that had been requested. Had all positions been granted, the cost to the county would have been over \$4 million. In contrast, last year 37 positions were added to the County's personnel base and almost \$2 million were taken from the General Fund account in order to balance the budget.

(continued next page)



Webb County Adopts Balanced Budget (*cont.*)

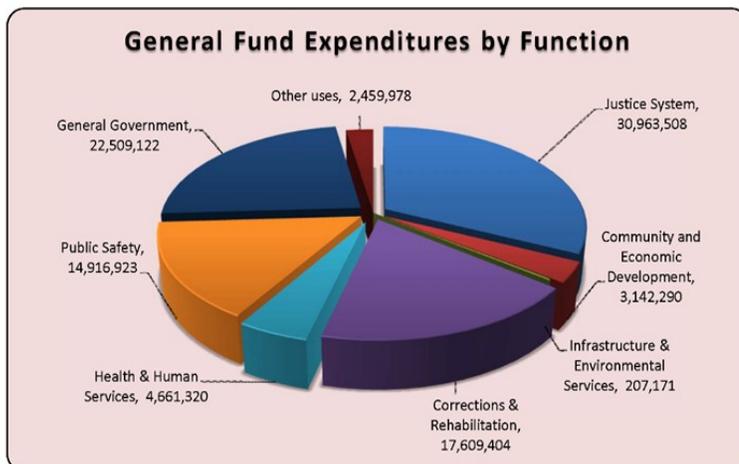
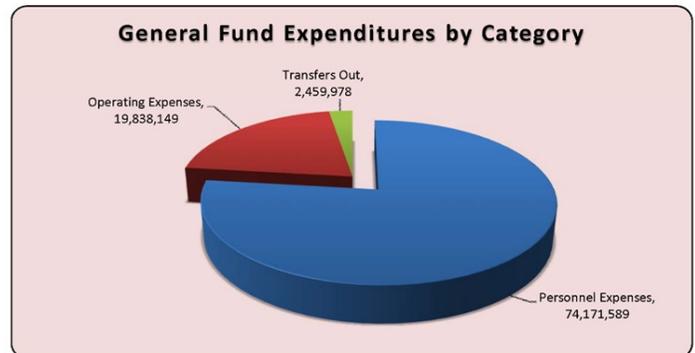


The months of preparation, research, and meetings, and the efforts to allocate taxpayer monies more responsibly, effectively, and efficiently came to a head in September. The tax roll was submitted by the Tax Assessor/Collector for approval after going through two hearings. The budget also went through several workshops with the Commissioners Court and department heads voicing their thoughts and requests. It was mid-September when the budget officers filed their proposed budget with the County Clerk's Office and Auditor's Office. This filing was followed by submission of the proposed balanced budget to Commissioners Court. During the final meeting of the fiscal year, the Court conducted a review

and deliberation on the proposed budget through a required public hearing. After hearing the thoughts and requests from county departments, the Commissioners Court voted to make minor changes to the budget. These changes were worked into the budget while still keeping total expenditures under total revenues. The budget officers' hard work finally paid off as Commissioners approved the budget. Within the budget are plans to fund road and bridge, law enforcement, judicial functions, county government, health and welfare, recreation and culture, community service, and other sources and uses. This will allow the county to take many initiatives to meet the needs of the citizens of the county and county departments.

"We're pleased with the end result of the budget and will continue monitoring the progress of spending throughout the year," stated Leroy Medford.

"I would like to commend these individuals for running a tight ship and helping us look out for the tax-payers," stated Webb County Judge Tano Tijerina, "At the end of the day, as public servants, it is our duty to ensure that we are good stewards of the taxpayers' monies."



Given the economic situation, it was necessary for the county to tighten its belt and assume a cost-cutting, value-adding plan for Webb County. Though unpopular at times, the powerful effect that this new plan caused in having a balanced budget cannot be disputed. It is a plan that will remain in effect as the budget officers and Webb County head into the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Though barely two months into the current budget, forecasts already have mineral valuations diminishing for the next fiscal year. This devaluation could cause a potential \$8 million shortfall in next year's county budget. The lessons learned this year will be powerful tools heading into an uncertain year, but the budget officers are confident that Webb County will weather the storm and emerge stronger and even more capable of serving all of its constituents.

National Eating Healthy Day

In observance of National Eating Healthy Day, the Administrative Services Department invited county employees to share on ORANGE. The goal was to provide healthy snack alternatives that are delicious and full of nutrients. A total of 45 lbs. of fruit were handed out along with citrus infused water providing employees the opportunity to switch out a sugary snack and a high in sugar carbonated drink for a sweet healthy fruit and water full of flavor thus proving that eating healthy can still satisfy our cravings.



Blood & Bodily Fluids Safety Training

The Administrative Services Department teamed up with Webb County Medical Examiner, Dr. Corinne Stern, in presenting a training on "Blood & Bodily Fluids Safety". Dr. Stern gave a riveting presentation on various pathogens and the precautions that employees should take when confronted with these scenarios. Over 100 employees from departments that regularly deal with these cases attended the informative training.

Community Center Event Roundup



In the spirit of giving and Thanksgiving, **La Presa Community Center** and Commissioner Frank Sciaraffa gave out turkeys to the elderly members of the community.



The **Bruni Community Center** was joined by Commissioner Wawi Tijerina in hosting the annual Elderly Thanksgiving Luncheon. The members were treated to lunch, music, loteria and door prizes



Commissioner Wawi Tijerina and La Raza 95.7 FM gave out turkeys at **Larga Vista Community Center**. Giving thanks for what we have and praying for those that don't.



The **Santa Teresita Community Center** held their annual Thanksgiving Luncheon. Members of the community joined in to give thanks and enjoy a delicious meal.



The **Ladrillito Activity Center** hosted a month of love, sharing, and caring, looking back over the past year and reflecting on all the things to be thankful for.



Members of the **Fernando A Salinas Community Center** celebrated Halloween with a spirited Monster Mash celebration with lots of fun in each other's company.

Champion Honored

Webb County Commissioners Court meeting, a presentation of Certificate of Achievement was issued to Mr. Vito Rodriguez. He was recognized for his competition in the 2015 World Karate and Kickboxing Championship tournament in Orlando Florida. Mr. Rodriguez won bronze in individual points sparring and gold in team sparring for team U.S.A.! Congratulations!



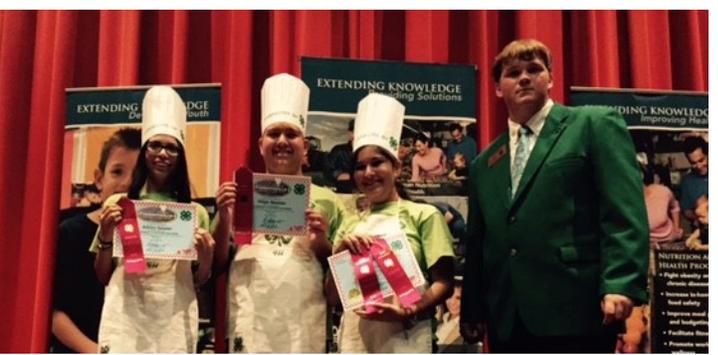
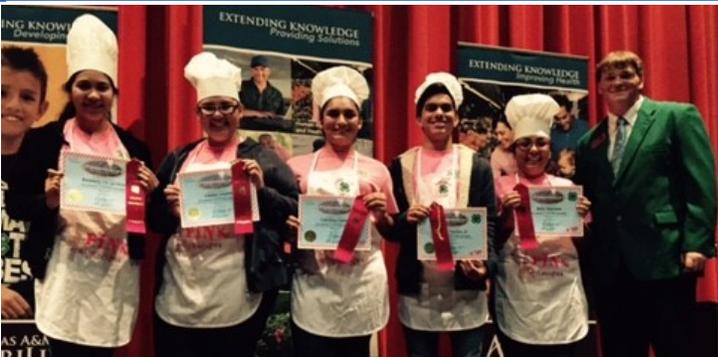
Head Start Proclamations

During the month of November, Webb County officiated several proclamations. November 19th was officially proclaimed as National Parental Involvement Day in Webb County, TX. The entire month of November 2015 was also proclaimed as the Webb County Head Start Father Involvement Month! Webb County is proud of all the staff and parents for their hard work and dedication to making a difference in our community.



Youth Food Challenge

The Webb County Extension Office loves to see our youth succeed! Last month, local area children took part in a food challenge contest. All 3 teams placed and advanced to represent Webb County at the 4-H District 12 Food Show Contest in Alice, Texas.



Submit your department stories for next month! E-mail your story along with any pictures to webbpio@webbcountytx.gov. Stories will be edited for style, grammar, and length. Please be advised that, due to space limitations, we cannot guarantee that all stories will be publicized.