



THE

# FRONT PORCH News



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News and Information from the City of Bulverde  
and our Neighbors

Issue 10 ☆ December 2014





# THE FRONT PORCH News

## CITY OF BULVERDE

ALL DEPARTMENTS

(COUNCIL, ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC WORKS, POLICE, ETC.)

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**Kirk Harrison**, COUNCIL

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## FRONT PORCH NEWS

editor@ci.bulverde.tx.us

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As a City publication, the Front Porch News strives to maintain objectivity and accuracy in all published content. The newsletter must remain neutral in the publication of content that may be considered controversial, biased, or inflammatory within the community (e.g., political content or opinions, religious material, etc.). The newsletter differs from a newspaper in that opinion pieces are typically not included. Publication of contributing partner content is subject to review for applicability and appropriateness of a publicly funded communication initiative. The newsletter is produced in part through public funding, and is accordingly governed by the regulations set forth in Texas State Law.

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# Mayor's Point



**Bill Krawietz**  
Mayor of Bulverde, TX

It's hard to believe that the City of Bulverde was created seventeen years ago. A lot has changed since we incorporated. As much as we try, the reality is that we are no longer a quiet little rural community.

One of our goals as a City is to have a sense of identity. We look to our past and strive to build on that strong heritage to shape the future.

The City has taken a stronger role in supporting community events, like the Bulverde Jubilee and Christmas Lighting. The City Council has made it a priority to dedicate City staff resources to assist with the planning of most major local events. However, assistance has been given for years to the Bulverde Jubilee and Christmas Lighting beyond our public safety obligation of police protection and traffic control.

A new initiative of the City is hosting our own City-coordinated events such as the recent Trunk or Treat and Movie Night in the Park, both of which were well attended and about which very positive feedback has been received. Many more events are being discussed and planned.

The new Bulverde Community Park has been a great success. It is used for all sorts of activities, from large group events, to people just enjoying their lunch outdoors at the picnic tables.

One area resident has enjoyed watching his children play at the new Park so much that he decided to make a very generous donation to the City for of an expansive amount of new equipment to be added to the children's playground area. This donor wishes to remain anonymous, but I would like to thank him on behalf of all our citizens. It will truly be a great addition to our park and the community.

We live in a naturally beautiful area, but what makes Bulverde great is its people. There is a real sense of community here. It makes me proud to be your Mayor.



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# Bulverde Home Rule Charter FAQs

In October 2014, a group of citizens was appointed by the City Council to draft a home rule charter that will be submitted to the citizens of Bulverde for future approval. To assist in understanding what a Home Rule Charter is, a listing of frequently asked questions has been assembled. The Home Rule Charter Commission will be holding a public forum on Thursday, December 11th at 6:30 p.m. at the Bulverde Activity (Senior) Center to present their initial draft Charter. For further information, please visit: [http://www.ci.bulverde.tx.us/default.aspx?name=aprojectpage\\_HRC](http://www.ci.bulverde.tx.us/default.aspx?name=aprojectpage_HRC).

## Question: What is a Home Rule Charter?

**Answer:** The home rule charter is the "constitution" of Bulverde. The charter will be drafted by a group of fifteen Bulverde residents who were appointed by the Mayor and City Council. The charter goes into effect only after a majority of Bulverde citizens have approved it in an election. Texas cities become eligible to adopt home rule charters if they have a population of 5,000 or more. 93.6% of eligible cities in Texas have adopted home rule charters (as of 2010).

## Question: In a nutshell, what are the inherent powers of home rule cities?

**Answer:** In a nutshell the powers are: Municipal Organization; Annexation; Initiative, Referendum, and Recall; Charter Amendments; Limitation on Home Rule Powers.

## Question: Who is behind the effort to get a Home Rule Charter approved?

**Answer:** Bulverde citizens. Home Rule is the right of citizens at the grassroots level to manage their own affairs with minimum interference from the state. Home Rule assumes that governmental problems should be solved at the lowest possible level, closest to the people.

## Question: Will my property taxes increase if a Home Rule Charter is approved?

**Answer:** No. Home Rule charters do not change the current laws and requirements regarding the ability and authority of the City regarding taxes. The city council currently has the authority and responsibility to set the property tax rate each year in accordance with state law. The Comal County Appraisal District sets property values each year. The adoption of a Charter does not change the current process for setting tax rates or appraising property.

## Question: How will approving a Home Rule Charter affect me?

**Answer:** Approving a Charter will allow the citizens to govern themselves by establishing rights, responsibilities, and privileges for all Bulverde residents, so long as content in the Charter is not superseded by State or Federal laws. Charters allow for citizens to:

- Determine the number of council members to represent the citizens.
- Determine how long terms of office are for the Mayor and Council Members.
- Determine how the Mayor and Council Members are elected.
- Determine how long the Mayor and Council Members stay in office, and how many times the Mayor and Council Members can run for office.
- Determine which form of government will be utilized. It can only be changed by citizens voting to amend the charter.
- Determine if citizens should have the right to request a binding initiative on the ballot; an initiative allows the citizenry to propose new laws or change the charter through a general election ballot measure.

- Determine if citizens should have the right to recall the Mayor or Council Member.
- Determine if citizens should have the right to call for a referendum, which is the method by which a measure adopted by the City Council may be submitted to the electorate for a vote.

## Question: What will home rule chartering provide for residents of Bulverde in terms of services?

**Answer:** No matter whether Bulverde is a General Law city or Home Rule city, the city has wide authority to provide services directly to citizens. Cities provide police, public works, parks, recreation, health, and other services. Some services are franchised to private companies to provide services in the city, such as waste management. Home rule cities typically have broader local control to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens.

## Question: Who can vote on the Home Rule Charter?

**Answer:** Only registered voters of the City of Bulverde may vote on the home rule charter.

## Question: How do I find out if I am in the City or the ETJ?

**Answer:** If you have a question as to whether your property is within the City or ETJ, you may visit the maps on the City's website or contact the City's Planning and Zoning Commission. You may also visit the GIS page at: [www.cceo.org](http://www.cceo.org)

## Question: I've heard that Home Rule will likely give the citizens of Bulverde more authority. How is that?

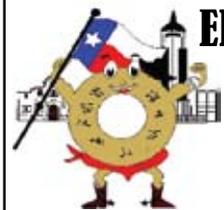
**Answer:** Home Rule Charters typically provide for recall, initiative, and referendum rights for citizens.

- Recall allows citizens to vote to remove a city council member (including the mayor) from elected office, if the member knowingly violates a provision of the charter, engages in official misconduct, or demonstrates incompetence.
- Initiative is the process that allows citizens, through a petition, to initiate legislation (through ordinances).
- Referendum is the process that allows citizens, through a petition and election, to overturn ordinances passed by the city council.
- Recall, Initiative, and Referendum are not legally permitted in General Law cities.

## Question: How will a Charter likely affect the annexation authority of Bulverde?

**Answer:** Home Rule cities can extend city boundaries (annex) unilaterally while general law cities can generally annex only with permission of property owners or with approval of a majority of the

*(Continued on page 5)*



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(Continued from page 4)

residents of an annexed area. However, annexation by Texas home rule cities is limited in various ways, including the following:

- Cities can annex no more than ten percent (10%) of their area in any given year.
- When annexing existing residential areas containing more than 100 housing units, cities must file an annexation plan; annexation cannot occur until three years after the filing of the plan. The territory to be annexed must be adjacent to existing city limits.
- A service plan must be attached to all annexations, indicating what services will be provided to the annexed area and under what conditions the services will be provided. Under Texas law some services such as police protection must be provided immediately upon annexation.

**Question: Isn't annexation involuntary?**

**Answer:** There are more options for unilateral annexation of property for a home rule city under state law than the authority for a general law city. Creating annexation plans is a right and responsibility of a home rule charter city which wishes to annex. General Law cities may only take in land per requests of landowners, or under very limited circumstances.

**Question: I own property within the city limits of Bulverde, but live elsewhere. Can I vote on a Charter?**

**Answer:** No, you must be a resident of the City and a registered voter in order to vote on a Charter. However, the Home Rule Charter Commission would like your input while the Charter is being drafted.

**Question: Will the City Council determine the language included in the Bulverde Charter?**

**Answer:** No. The City Council's only role is simply to appoint the Charter Commission members, who will draft the Charter, which then will be submitted to Bulverde citizens for approval. The city council cannot edit the submitted charter. It goes to the voters as it is written and approved by the commission.

**Question: What is the ETJ and how does it affect me?**

**Answer:** The "ETJ" stands for Extraterritorial Jurisdiction, and is the area within one mile of the City Limits of Bulverde. The City enforces its Subdivision Ordinance and Sign Regulations within the ETJ. This is the same whether you are a home rule city or a general law city.

**Question: How will people living in the ETJ be affected if Home Rule is approved for the City of Bulverde?**

**Answer:** As areas are annexed, the City will have a greater ability to manage development intensity, quality building standards, dark sky ordinances, and other ordinances adopted by the City Council. The city may also be able to better protect residential and commercial properties and citizens that live adjacent to the unincorporated county area, through proper ordinances and zoning.

**Question: Will the status of my agriculture tax exemption change with the passage of the Home Rule Charter?**

**Answer:** No. Home Rule will not affect that status.

**Question: Is the City Council able to make changes to the Charter?**

**Answer:** No, any changes to the Charter must be approved by an election of the voters.



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# Holiday Safety Tips



With the holidays rapidly approaching, members of the Bulverde Police Department want all citizens and commuters to stay safe during the holidays, and will be taking extra steps to assist with creating a safer community. The holiday season is historically one of the busiest travel times of the year. During this holiday period there will be additional officers on duty enforcing all traffic laws, with an emphasis on speed compliance and alcohol related offenses. The enforcement period will begin on December 20th and run through January 2nd, so please slow down, buckle up, and never drink and drive.

Additionally, the Bulverde Police Department would like to remind everyone to stay alert during this holiday period to avoid becoming a victim of crime. Criminals will often target shopping areas during the holidays, looking

for crimes of opportunity. When you leave your vehicle, do not leave items of value where they can be seen. Place valuables under the seat or in the trunk. Always be sure you lock your vehicle; many times, thefts can be avoided by simply locking your vehicle. When walking to and from your vehicle, be observant of what's going on around you; and ladies, please never leave your purse unattended, even while you are inside a store shopping. We are hopeful to have several volunteers who will be assisting with area business patrols as part of the Volunteers in Police Services program, and weather permitting, BPD bike patrol on duty as well. Our citizens can be one of our best defenses against crime by reporting suspicious activity. So please, if you observe suspicious activities, do not hesitate to report it to law enforcement. **Best Wishes** and **Happy Holidays** from the City of Bulverde and your Bulverde Police Department.



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# Volunteering in Your Community



A spirit of volunteerism has been with Americans since the very first pioneers traveled west. Many historians believe the earliest instances of the history of volunteerism in America began when early colonists formed support systems made up of volunteers in order to survive the many challenges that came with continental relocation. Future generations have carried on that American spirit of volunteerism.

Volunteer opportunities are everywhere, including with the City of Bulverde. Recently, the Bulverde Police Department initiated a *Volunteers in Police Services* (VIPS) program, which gives volunteers the opportunity to come out and assist the Bulverde Police Department with various functions. The VIPS program in Bulverde is envisioned to enhance and supplement existing neighborhood and business patrols, with a strict “observe and report only” policy for volunteers. Additionally, volunteers may assist with special community events, assist officers with residential and business checks, roadway speed surveys, clerical duties, investigations, etc. These are all great opportunities to work alongside Police officers in your community and a great opportunity to actually make a difference in Bulverde.

Volunteers have been assisting the City of Bulverde for some time, but one person has become a staple for volunteerism within the organization. John Clements has been providing valuable volunteer services to the City for the last eight years. John performs essential duties which support the Bulverde municipal court, front office staff, and the Police Department. John’s services have become so valuable that additional personnel are often assigned to assist when John is not available to volunteer. John has also volunteered to be the point of contact for the recently created VIPS program. John is a longtime resident of Comal County who also served his Country well with 20 years of service in the United States Air Force. Two of those years were served overseas during Vietnam. Upon retiring from the Air Force, John went to work for 24 years at Kelly Air Force Base as a civilian. Additionally, John volunteers for the Comal County Crime Stoppers, where he has served on the Board of Directors since 2008. John is also a graduate of the Comal County Sheriffs Citizens Academy.

If you are interested in volunteering for the VIPS program specifically, or volunteering with the City of Bulverde generally, please send an email to [vipsapplication@ci.bulverde.tx.us](mailto:vipsapplication@ci.bulverde.tx.us) with your name, address, and a contact number. John will gladly assist you.

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# Happy Howl-i-days from



Spending the holidays with family can be fun, but it also can be dangerous for our furry family members. Cats and dogs may become anxious about the increased traffic at home and try to escape, hide, or exhibit destructive behavior. If you are planning a holiday gathering, consider putting your animals in a closed off room so you can be sure that your animals are safe and secure.

Fur-babies and Christmas trees do not necessarily mix. Pine needles are mildly toxic if chewed. They also can cause intestinal damage if swallowed, as can tinsel and ribbons. Artificial snow is also toxic. If you choose a real tree, make sure your dog or cat cannot drink the water in the stand, as pesticides or other chemicals can leach from the tree. Consider wrapping the base in aluminum foil; cats don't like putting their nails in the foil. You can also spray Bitter Apple or a citrus spray on the tree prior to decorating it to keep the animals away.

Make sure the tree is secure in the stand and leave plenty of room around it, keeping it free from shelves or furniture "launching pads." Leave the tree undecorated for a couple of days to give your dog or cat time to investigate the tree without risking damage to ornaments. Hang ornaments that shine or dangle near the top. Avoid glass ornaments that can break and cut paws.

Other toxic dangers include holly, mistletoe, poinsettias, lilies, and chocolate. Onions, coffee grounds, grapes, raisins, and alcohol also are dangerous for your animals. If you have concerns about anything your animal may have ingested, call your local veterinarian or the **Pet Poison Helpline (800-213-6680)**.





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## A Little Art Show

The Bulverde Area Arts Center is planning a little different show for the Christmas season at the gallery. The key word is 'little' since all of the art will be no larger than 12 inches by 12 inches in size, or 144 square inches. The objective of the show is to display diversity of art and artists in the Bulverde area and to provide a large selection of affordable original art for gift giving.

Members of BAAC exhibit art in many mediums including oil on canvas, pastels, watercolors, acrylic on canvas and acrylic on board, photography, glass, charcoal, sculptures, mixed media and others. Visitors often comment on the quality of art displayed in the gallery which does not surprise members whose ranks include artists who have studied extensively throughout the United States and around the world. Add to the mix that some people are just naturally talented and you can understand the deserved praise.

The gallery is located at 2355 Bulverde Road, #9, across from Mike's in the Village. There is no admission charge to visit the gallery, and gallery hours are Fridays and Saturdays from 4 pm to 8 pm and Sundays from 11 am to 3 pm.

## Why The Bulverde Area Humane Society Must Just Say "No"

By Tom Blacklock



"Just say no," was an anti-drug term coined by First Lady Nancy Reagan in 1982 and it was a phrase that the youth of America could invoke when presented with the opportunity to use drugs. Unfortunately the volunteers at the Bulverde Area Humane Society (BAHS) have had to resort to the use of this term when asked by people wishing to surrender dogs and cats. While saying no is not easy for the volunteers it has become necessary because the Shelter does not have the available space or resources to accept additional cats or dogs.

Why is the shelter, seemingly always full one might ask? The Bulverde Area Humane Society is a no-kill shelter and will not euthanize surrendered critters due to a lack of space or length of stay. Our goal at BAHS is to save the lives of friendly animals whether they are healthy or sick or injured, and find them forever homes. We strive to accomplish this goal with a small cadre of part-time caretakers and volunteers operating with limited financial resources. Because of the overwhelming volume of dogs, cats, and kittens (especially) that have been surrendered and this no-kill policy, the part-time staff and volunteers just cannot accommodate additional animals.

If one were to visit our shelter, he or she would see our open country areas and would assume we could handle many more unwanted critters. However it is not just merely a matter of space to house the animals. Dogs and cats have to be fed and their pens cleaned daily. Also our furry residents have to be taken to the Vet for a variety of reasons and many times need to be medicated twice daily. Additionally, there is the cost for vaccinations and monthly heartworm and flea prevention medications, and the need for volunteers to administer them. Also, puppies and kittens frequently have to be bottle-fed every few hours. These functions require individuals who are willing to give of their time to insure that the dogs and cats receive the proper care. While we have a number of outstanding volunteers, their number is not sufficient to handle more animals than we currently have. Thus, we are placed in the untenable position of having to say "no" to too many people wishing to surrender an animal(s). While it saddens us deeply to just say "no," we must do so in order to humanely treat those critters already in our care.

BAHS accepts adoptable pets by appointment only with the acceptance based upon space available. Our decision to accept pets will be on a first come first served basis. Individuals seeking information about surrendering a pet are encouraged to contact us at [BAHShelter@yahoo.com](mailto:BAHShelter@yahoo.com) or at (830) 980-2247.

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# Our volunteers are *priceless!*

The Bulverde Spring Branch Activity Center honored all of their volunteers Wednesday, November 5 at the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. The luncheon was attended by 100+ volunteers. Entertainment was provided by the S.A. Joong Ang Dance Group and the event was catered by Papa Gallo's. The meal was served by volunteers from Broadway Bank and GVTC. Mr. Chris Thompson of Thompson Consulting spoke to the group on the importance of volunteering and the benefits of the Meals on Wheels program at the activity center. It was noted that 5,810 hours have been logged into the computer. The National value of in-kind service is \$22 per hour. That gives the volunteer hours a value of \$127,820.

4,097 of the hours involved services in the Meals on Wheels program and meal preparation. Wendy Hahn, senior outreach coordinator, and Monica Conkins, volunteer kitchen coordinator, team up to



Members of the GVTC Community Involvement Committee helped to serve our BSBAC volunteers at our appreciation luncheon.

plan outreach services, organize our Meals on Wheels program and kitchen services.

There are many other volunteers who eagerly give their valuable time to help the Activity Center run smoothly on a daily basis. Some of these volunteers activities include the Front desk, yard maintenance, committee meetings and activities, gift shop, and raising and lowering the flag. Every volunteer is so important to us. As Wendy Hahn says, "We exist because of them."

## Join us for our "Holiday Breakfast Feast" and Open House

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# Area **Businesses Recognized** As Top Workplaces and Business Leaders



Recently, the San Antonio Express-News published its list of 2014 Top Workplaces and three of our area businesses were recognized: **Randolph-Brooks Federal Credit Union (RBFCU)** was #4 on the Large Employers list, **GVTC Communications** was #24 on the Mid-Size Employers list, and **M&S Engineering** was #19 on the Small Employers list.

Additionally, **ECS Learning Systems**, a sister company of Bulverde-based Mammen Investments, was recently honored by the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at UTSA as a Small Business Leader in the areas of job retention and business development.

And last but not least, this past summer **RBFCU**, **Futurex**, **Service King Collision Repair Centers**, and **Texas Physical Therapy Specialists** made the San Antonio Business Journal's list of 50 finalists for its annual "Best Places to Work Awards".

We have some remarkable businesses in our area that are truly active in our community, bring jobs to our local economy, and most importantly, provide a wonderful workplace for their employees with great career opportunities, benefits, and shorter travel commute times to foster a better quality of life. Please join us in congratulating these businesses! We should be very proud of their accomplishments and the fact that they are a part of our community. They are helping to put the Bulverde/Spring Branch Area on the map as the Premier Texas Hill Country Community to live, learn, work, and play!

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**Sherry Mosier**  
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# Recent Ribbon Cuttings!

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GJ Gardner Comal Custom Homes  
Kelani Yogurt  
Mindy Carlettini Photography  
Nancy Wehrung  
Robert J. Falkenberg, Attorney At Law, PLLC

### Renewing

Animal Hospital of Smithson Valley  
Best Western Plus Blanco Luxury Inn & Sui  
Bryan's Lawn Care  
Bulverde/Spring Branch Library  
Catherine Scroggins-Brownlow  
Documation  
Eccleston, Donna  
Fossil Creek Pools  
Haven Builders  
Hill Country Soup-N-Salad Bar  
Light Shine Ministries  
MCCI Medical Group of Legacy Place  
Middleman Construction Company LLC  
Moy Tarin Ramirez Engineers, LLC  
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Rebecca Creek Ranch  
Smithson Valley Counseling Center, Inc.  
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## BSB Chamber of Commerce Events Calendar

Every 3rd Wednesday  
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December 2, 2014  
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Emergency Service Awards

Join us for the First Annual Bulverde/Spring Branch Area Chamber of Commerce Rodeo on February 6 and 7, 2015 at Tejas Rodeo Company in Bulverde, Texas, hosted by Diamond Cross Rodeo Company.

Grab your boots and slap on the bling, as this two night event is sure to provide a high flyin', boot-scootin', family friendly and memorable weekend featuring rowdy bulls, lighting fast horses, fun for the kiddos and a special guest appearance by the PRCA Clown of the Year, Mr. Leon Coffee!

Visit [www.bulverdespringbranchchamber.com](http://www.bulverdespringbranchchamber.com) for more information and to purchase your tickets.



*\*\*For information on any of the above events,  
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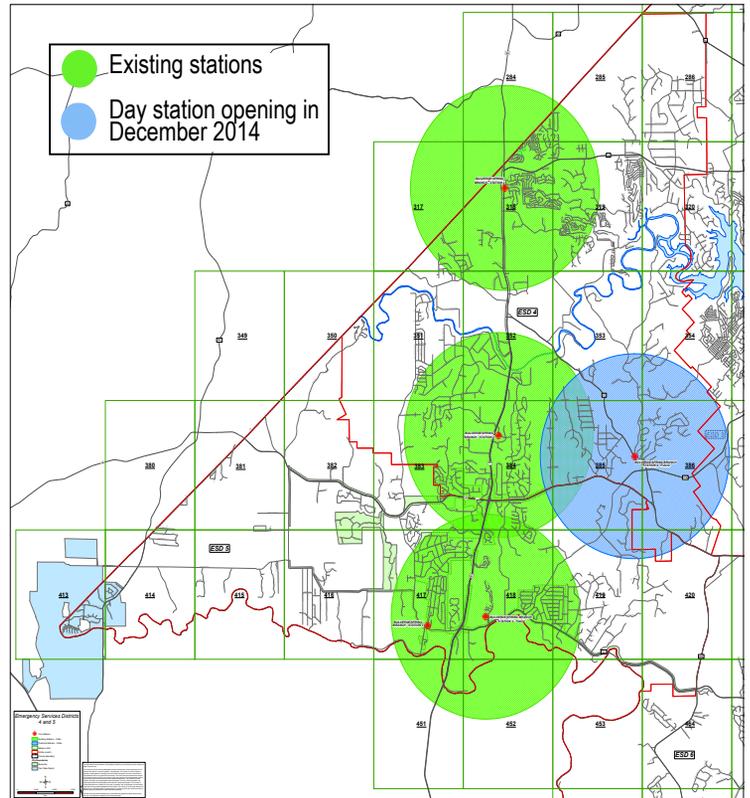
# SAVING LIVES THROUGH KEY PLACEMENT OF STATIONS

It is a common expression that time is money, but in Emergency Services, time is lives saved. Emergency vehicles can only drive so fast to be safe for crews and others on the road, so station placement is crucial. We currently have three stations located up and down US Highway 281.

ESD No. 4, which represents residents in the northern part of our 216 square mile district, just purchased land to eventually build a permanent station near the corner of FM 311 and Rebecca Creek. There are no funds in the budget for the bricks and mortar to build a fully operating 24-hour station at this time, so a temporary mobile building will be moved onto that site. This critical location serves the increasing calls for help by citizens living in the Rebecca Creek, Whispering Hills, and Mountain Springs neighborhoods.

To effectively address station, equipment, and staffing challenges over the last 10 years, decisive long-range strategic planning has been a key focus of your Emergency Services. The best planning however, cannot replace a funding mismatch when populations, both residential and commercial, are expanding faster than tax revenues. It is imperative, given increasing 911 call volumes, that personnel and resources be stationed as close to neighborhoods as possible.

As mentioned in previous issues of the *Front Porch News*, we will be asking you to vote in May of 2015 to approve raising the property tax cap for residents in ESD No. 4's district from 6 cents per \$100 of taxable value to a maximum of 10 cents per \$100 of taxable value. For homeowners, a 1-cent increase translates to an additional \$20 per year on a \$200,000 property. This does not mean that the taxes will be raised accordingly, but this will bring



ESD No. 4 in line (identical 10-cent caps) with ESD No. 1 and ESD No. 5—all of which are in our 216 square mile district of Bulverde Spring Branch Fire & EMS. Each ESD that supports your Fire & EMS response needs this parity.

More importantly, this cap increase will help us address the additional Fire and EMS personnel needed to cover this rapidly growing area. Over 70% of the annual budget covers the daily cost of personnel actively serving our community.

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# SAVE A LIFE IN BULVERDE AND SPRING BRANCH

Anyone can learn CPR—and everyone in Bulverde and Spring Branch should. Why is this so important in our rural area? Because if a friend or loved one suffers cardiac arrest and someone does not quickly (within 5 minutes or less) begin CPR compressions there will be brain damage....or death. This is particularly alarming when you understand that 88% of cardiac arrests occur in a home. Put simply, the life you save by learning CPR is most likely to be someone you love.

For Bulverde Spring Branch residents, learning CPR is as simple and easy as remembering **Five Alive**. A recent study titled *Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes* showed that people who viewed a video on CPR were significantly more likely to attempt life-saving resuscitation. Can you imagine in Bulverde and Spring Branch how many lives would be saved if more residents learned CPR firsthand instead of just by a video?

**FREE & EASY**—On the 5th day of every month at 6:05 p.m. at our Central Station at 353 Rodeo Drive in Spring Branch, we proudly present Comedy CPR and First Aid called **Five Alive**. It used to be at 5:00 p.m., which fits with the theme better, but nobody could get off work that early. So now it starts at 6:05 pm!

This program is open to everyone (all ages) and is absolutely free. We do ask that you go to our education website at [www.bsbcehs.org](http://www.bsbcehs.org) and hit the blue “Register Now” button. If you need more information, please call 830-228-4504. The class is only an hour, and is a fun way to gain knowledge and confidence to save a life.

Let us share with you that we are so proud to be your award-winning Fire & EMS. We are even more proud of our immediate response to your 911 calls. However, the time it takes to get to your home from any of our three stations is, on average, at least 8 minutes. So the hard truth of the matter is, unless you suffer cardiac arrest in front of one of us, it will be your loved ones and bystanders who save your life. Please enroll in one of our **Five Alive** courses now.

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Recently, 800 students from Spring Branch Middle School were trained to save a life

# The Buzz From the Garden



Fall has been exciting in the Bulverde Community Garden and winter will soon be here. This fall has seen the harvest of the Cub Scout's mini pumpkins, fall tomatoes were producing well into November, Nathan's snap peas continue to grow rapidly and the Provisions broccoli and cauliflower are yielding florets.

The Bulverde Community Garden Committee is proud to announce that Phase 2 of the Garden construction is under way. The committee wants to thank the Bulverde/Spring Branch community for continued support. The Garden has received a generous grant from Home Depot to complete this phase of construction and aspects of



Phase 3 as well. Eagle scouts and the Boy Scout community continue to offer their talents in developing the Garden. Eagle Scout, Hunter Jackson has worked diligently to complete the 8' x 8' garden shed. Hunter is a member of BSA Troop 58. The new 6' x 6' compost bin was built by Boy Scout Troop 442 Eagle

Scout, Konnor Dunn and members of his troop. Next on the list are garden plots made from pavers and the Garden kiosk for announcements and information.

Another special thank-you goes out to Ms. Laura Mendel who has been instrumental in the establishment of the Garden. Laura is part of the planning committee from the beginning as well as the Garden liaison for Provisions. Unfortunately, Laura is moving to Waco and all of us at the Garden and Provisions will miss her tremendously.



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## Tips for Holiday Décor From the Garden

By Lorelei Mayer

Christmas is just a few weeks away. Are you ready? Is all your decorating done? Need some last minute inspiration? Go out to your garden and see what nature has in store for you!

Pick a few acorns off the ground, cut some grapevine, some twigs, berries off bushes and trees. Trim some rosemary, sage, or lavender. Wire these trimmings into clusters of 3 and tie onto a circle form for a very fragrant wreath.



Paint some acorns in your choice of traditional or not-so-traditional colors. Make sure you glue the acorn to the cap (they tend to fall out of the cap as they dry). Cover the cap with glue and dip in glitter. Hang from a bare branch for a modern take on decorating.



For some tree or package ornaments, cut some twigs about 6 inches long. Cut 5 pieces of ribbon, each about 5 inches long. Tie the ribbons to the twig and trim the ends of the ribbon in a tree shape. You can use any color ribbon, it's a good way to use up ribbon scraps.

Make salt dough ornaments: ½ cup table salt, 1 cup flour, and ½ cup warm water. Use a mixer to blend and mix for about 8 minutes. Add a little more flour if needed and roll out onto parchment paper. Cut into rectangles and press cut leaves, branches, etc. into the dough. Use a skewer to make a hole for the ribbon. Use watercolors to lightly paint the dough after baking or use stamps and ink and stamp before baking. Place the parchment paper on a cookie sheet and bake for 4 hours at 200 degrees. Rosemary, lavender and chives heads are great to use in these ornaments.

Take a walk outside and see what you can use to decorate your home for the holidays. You'd be surprised what you can make without a lot of cash outlay.

If you or your business would like to secure a plot (at no cost) or make a donation, please visit the garden website at [www.bulverdecommunitygarden.com](http://www.bulverdecommunitygarden.com) or contact Joanne Hall @ [johall@gvtc.com](mailto:johall@gvtc.com). The Bulverde Community Garden Committee meets the third Monday of the month at the Bulverde Activity Center AT 5:15 P.M. The meeting is open to the public.

# Gifts to the Community Park

The Friends of the Park, the fundraising and advisory committee of The Bulverde Community Parks Association, recently presented the City of Bulverde with a check for \$37,541.51 for the purchase of new playground equipment for the park. The bulk of the donation, \$30,000.00, came from a single anonymous donor. Other donations included \$500.00 from St. Paul Lutheran Church, \$500.00 from Ralph and Bev Lemes for flag poles, and accumulated individual donations from public events such as the Bulverde Jubilee, Movies in the Park, and the grand opening picnic.

Donations of specific items include the Bulverde Lions Club gift of two trees, which have been planted and are doing well. K-9 Country Club and Training Academy of Bulverde donated three pet waste stations, which have been installed at appropriate locations along the walking paths in the park. Intended for use by people walking their dogs in the park, the stations include bags for picking up after your pet and disposal receptacles.



Friends of the Park chair Merri Harrison presented the City of Bulverde Mayor Bill Krawietz a check for \$37,541.51 at a recent city council meeting for the purchase of additional park playground equipment. Also present were (l to r) Councilmembers Rob Hurst, Gene Hartman, Kirk Harrison, Krawietz, Ray Jeffery.

If you are interested in making a donation to the Friends of the Park towards the purchase of future equipment or park activities, contact Merri Harrison at 210-387-9332. The Friends of the Park, through the Bulverde Community Parks Association, is a 501 c (3) corporation; your donations are fully tax deductible as allowed by law. Consult your tax advisor for more information.



The need to provide more playground equipment for the 5-12 year old group of children was resolved with a generous donation of \$30,000 from an anonymous donor in our community for the purchase of the items shown. The equipment will be installed on a rubber playground safety surface later this year, and will be ready for play in January or sooner.



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# Lions Help to Improve St. Jude's Ranch for Children Facility

Lions from the Spring Branch Bulverde Family Lions Club completed a much-needed new deck and rain gutters at the multi-purpose building at St. Jude's Ranch for Children in Bulverde. Funds for the deck and gutter materials were generously provided by the GVTC Foundation. St. Jude's Ranch works to transform the lives of abused and at-risk children, young adults, and families by empowering them to create new chances, new choices, and new hope in a caring community. The Lions will let the wood on the deck dry for a few months and then apply a sealer or paint to the wood. The deck, as well as extensive renovation to the building, was featured in a Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting ceremony in October.



Lion Gary Dawson puts finishing touches on the railing.



The completed deck on the renovated multi-purpose building.

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Leader Series students and their class Counselor, Mr. Mark Kirchoff (far right)

## Scholarship Foundation Emerging Leaders Series

On October 14th, sophomore students from Canyon Lake High School completed the first of four seminars of the highly regarded Emerging Leaders Series hosted by the Scholarship Foundation of Bulverde Spring Branch. The personal assessment focus of the first session, led by Dr. Larry Sunn, helps the youngsters gain confidence in their left-brain/right-brain-preferences and apply those preferences to their vocational aspirations. Follow-on seminars focus on employment readiness, business etiquette, job skill choices, and preparation for post high school educational opportunities. Sophomores have been the focus of the sessions for the past five years in order that there is sufficient time for students to focus on career choices and sign up for appropriate course work prior to graduation. This year's class of 21 students, chosen from 31 applicants is, according to Foundation President, Christopher Mammen, "Our strongest group of emerging leaders yet." For further information about the Scholarship Foundation visit <http://scholarship-foundation.com/>.

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# DIY—

## An Artist's Eye

Article and Photos  
by Debbie Karnes

I have a love-hate relationship with DIY. All the TV shows, blogs, websites make it look so easy. The homes are beautifully transformed using repurposed, reclaimed furnishings. Recently, I was inspired by one of those shows to use an old school map as a wall hanging. My husband was not impressed. Where I saw “character,” he saw “old and torn.” We compromised on a new-but-looks-old world map on canvas, and I would make a frame to add that vintage feel I wanted. Making a 60” x 40” frame, how hard could it be, right?

Searching for framing materials, I accidentally discovered “Junkology,” a local Salvage Design shop on Hwy 46 that I would have missed had I blinked. I stopped in and was met by the owner, Shawn Balmos, and a ton of junk. At first, it’s a bit overwhelming, but as I shared my vision for the frame, Shawn showed me the possible materials. More interesting, was the stories behind the pieces—where it came from, how old, and how it had spent its past life. I was hooked. My frame would ultimately be made from a 100 year old screen door from South Texas. Weathered, and thick with layers of old paint, Shawn could see a 60” x 40” frame. I trusted his vision.

I learned a lot about working with the old wood, paint and stain with Shawn’s encouraging and empowering words resonating in my ears, “don’t worry, you can’t mess this up.” Born and raised in this area, Shawn has a passion for Salvage Design. “I love finding old pieces that most people would discard, giving them new life as beautiful art and home décor,” said Balmos. It’s not just locals who appreciate his vision. Old seats from a Tilt-a-Whirl found a new home when bought by country music star Miranda Lambert and Duck Dynasty’s, Korey Robertson. Barn doors with sliders, tables, headboards are some of the commissioned pieces Shawn Balmos has designed for local businesses and homes.

With an artist’s eye, and a heart for people, Shawn literally puts ‘skin in the game’ and not just with his “Junkology” tattoo, but his commitment to the community. A supporter of CISD’s Life Bridges Transition Program, Shawn conducts workshops for young adults with special needs. He teaches basic skills to create a project in one session and take home. According to Shawn, “It’s one of the most fun things I get to do (working with these young adults).” A lesson for us all.

So, how did my DIY project turn out? My 100 year old wood was sanded, scrub painted, stained and finished with a coat of poly for a nice sheen. I thought it looked great, but Shawn thought it was missing something.



Looking around his shop, he found an old travel steamer trunk, removed the hardware corners and hammered them to fit the frame corners. Using the hardware from a travel trunk on a map to give it a vintage look—pure genius. It went from a simple frame to a piece of art. We love it!

A frame is only part of what I got from this experience. I met a talented neighbor with a passion for art and community. And, more importantly, this DIY wannabe gained confidence that I can do this. So, get out there and give it a try. What’s my next project? Maybe a mantle out of that reclaimed wood I found at Junkology from that 1905 San Antonio Trolley. Let’s DIY this!

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# Odds 'n' Ends

## WOW!

The Wellness on Wheels mobile clinic will be in the Provisions Outreach parking lot on Tuesday, December 9th, from 9:00 am until 12:00 pm. The WOW staff can provide basic medical care for those who are uninsured or underinsured. No appointment is necessary. Provisions Outreach is located at 2295 Bulverde Road, Unit 1, Bulverde, TX 78163 (behind Wine 101 in the downtown Village of Bulverde).



## S.T.A.G.E. to Host a Free Holiday Open House

S.T.A.G.E., Inc. is hosting an Open House on Sunday, December 7 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Krause House Theatre, 1300 Bulverde Road in Bulverde. The COMAL COMMUNITY BAND will be playing their wonderful music on the Main stage beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Admission is free, but monetary and food donations for the buffet tables are always appreciated. Holiday refreshments will be offered on buffet tables throughout the building. SANTA will visit with children between 6 and 8 p.m. PARENTS – please bring your own camera for photos.

There will be a grocery shopping cart for those who wish to donate nonperishable food items for Provisions Outreach of Bulverde.



## A Holiday Tradition Continues

St. Paul Lutheran Church continues its annual Bulverde holiday tradition of presenting The Living Christmas, a portrayal of the biblical history of Christmas and the life of Jesus, depicted in vignette scenes, each acted by SPLC church members. Holiday music is provided by talented St. Paul musicians. The Living Christmas is on Saturday, December 13th; the drive through will open at 6:30 p.m. and remain open for visitors until 10:00 p.m. St. Paul Lutheran Church is located at 29797 U.S. Hwy. 281 North, just a few yards south of FM 1863. This is a free event, courtesy of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

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## On the Cover

The image of a brilliant red cardinal against a white snowy background has become an iconic image of winter and a picturesque "white Christmas." While we here in central Texas seldom get to experience snow at Christmas time, we do have the privilege of enjoying the beauty of an abundance of cardinals. These birds are relatively common to our area, but the unique and striking red color of the male is always a joy to see. Cardinals do not migrate and will mate "for life," which makes them doubly unique. A common ritual is for the male bird to feed the female, both while courting and while the female is tending to a clutch of eggs. The two lovebirds on the cover must have been in the courtship phase of their relationship, as the handsome male is offering a snack to his mate. Thanks go out once again to the wonderfully talented photographer Debbie Karnes. We are so lucky to have her collaboration for our cover art.



A common image as seen on holiday cards—a lovely cardinal pair framed by pristine white snow.

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## Through the Camera Lens

We received some beautiful photographs from our readers! There seems to be several very talented photographers in our area. Enjoy these photos of some of our local fauna. Thanks so much to Debbie Karnes, Rob Harris, and Susan Eisenbrey for these amazing shots!

© Susan Eisenbrey

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# Holiday Happenings at Bulverde/Spring Branch Library

By Debbie Soelberg

It's the most wonderful time of the year and Bulverde/Spring Branch Library wants to help you celebrate! We've got events for all ages to get you in the holiday spirit.

### Friends of the Library Holiday Tea

Thursday, December 4 from 4pm-6pm

Everyone's invited to this annual holiday tea! Come by for a warm cup of tea and delicious selection of cookies. It's the perfect way to start off the holiday season.

### Polar Express

Saturday, December 13 at 2pm

All aboard for an afternoon of fun and Christmas Spirit! Come dressed in your PJ's for a reading of Chris Van Allsburg's The Polar Express, hot chocolate, cookies, and a visit from a special guest!

### Frozen Sing-Along Movie Night

Friday, December 19 at 6pm

Warm up those vocal cords so you can sing along with the Snow Queen! We'll be watching the sing-along version of Disney's Frozen. Bring your own snacks and get ready to let it go!

### The Night Before Christmas

Monday, December 22 at 2pm

Watch Clement Clarke Moore's classic poem, "The Night Before Christmas," come to life in a live skit. After the performance stay for crafts and pictures with Santa!



**WE WANT YOUR**

## "Texas Winter" PHOTOS!

This region of Texas often boasts some unique sights and scenery during the winter holidays, and we would love to see your photos of a Texas-influenced winter and holidays! We are always looking for pictures that represent scenery, people, places, or events of the Bulverde and Spring Branch area. If you would like to submit your photos for consideration for publication, please send them as a high resolution JPG or TIFF file to [editor@ci.bulverde.tx.us](mailto:editor@ci.bulverde.tx.us), along with some background information about the photo (including location taken) and the photographer's name. You will be notified in advance if your photograph is

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# DECEMBER 2014

Bulverde  
*and other local events*

# JANUARY 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday			
	1	2 Planning & Zoning 6:30p	3 SBB Family Lions 7:30p (Activity Center) BAAC Mtg. 6:30p (Art Ctr)	4	5 Hill Country Water Summit 8:00a-5:00p (GVTC) FREE CPR/First Aid Class 6:00p (353 Rodeo Dr.)	6 Holiday Hunger Run 8:00a (Tejas Rodeo)	<b>NOTES:</b> Bulverde City Council, Bulverde Planning and Zoning Commission, and Friends of the Park meetings are held at Bulverde City Hall (30360 Cougar Bend)						1 New Year's Day	2 Chamber Annual Mtg 5:30p (Alamo Title Bldg.) FREE CPR/First Aid Class 6:00p (353 Rodeo Dr.)	3	
7 S.T.A.G.E. Holiday Open House 6:00p (S.T.A.G.E.)	8 Friends of the Library Board 1:30p (Library) Library District Board 4:00p (Library)	9 Wellness on Wheels 9:00a (Provisions) City Council 6:30p	10 Joint Mtg. BSBES & ESDs 4:30p (353 Rodeo Dr.)	11 Community Forum: Home Rule Charter 6:30p (Activity Center) Bulverde Lions 7:00p (Bulv. Comm. Ctr) Wine & Art 6:00p (Art Center)	12	13 Living Christmas 6:30p (St. Paul Lutheran) Denim & Diamonds 6:30p (Knabbe Ranch)	4	5	6 Wellness on Wheels 9:00a (Provisions) Planning & Zoning 6:30p	7 SBB Family Lions 7:30p (Activity Center) BAAC Mtg. 6:30p (Art Ctr)	8 Community Forum: Home Rule Charter 6:00p (City Hall) BSBES 6:00p (353 Rodeo Dr.) ESD #1, 4, & 5 7:00p (353 Rodeo Dr.) Wine & Art 6:00p (Art Center)	9	10			
14	15 Community Garden Mtg. 5:15p (Activity Center)	16 Hanukkah begins Native Plant Soc. 7:00p (GVTC)	17 SBB Family Lions 7:30p (Activity Center)	18	19 BPD P.O.E.T. Program 6:00p (City Hall)	20	11	12 Friends of the Library Board 1:30p (Library) Library District Board 4:00p (Library)	13 City Council 6:30p	14	15 Chamber Annual Awards 6:30p (The Lodge at the Falls)	16	17			
21	22	23	24 Hanukkah ends Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26	27	18	19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Community Garden Mtg. 5:15p (Activity Center)	20 Native Plant Soc. 7:00p (GVTC)	21 SBB Family Lions 7:30p (Activity Center)	22 Bulverde Lions 7:00p (Bulv. Comm. Ctr)	23 BPD P.O.E.T. Program 6:00p (City Hall)	24			
28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	<b>NOTES:</b> Bulverde City Council, Bulverde Planning and Zoning Commission, and Friends of the Park meetings are held at Bulverde City Hall (30360 Cougar Bend)						25 Free Outdoor Cat Control class 2:00p (353 Rodeo Dr.)	26	27 Friends of the Park 6:00p	28	29	30	31