

The Bandera PROPHET

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Briefings from Commissioners' Court
Bandera County population on the rise

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The Bandera Prophet

Evidence of a growing population, Bandera County Elections Administrator Gwenda Tshirhart told commissioners Tuesday morning her department is registering an average of 75 to 99 new voters per month.

In each of the county's four precincts, Tshirhart said Pct. 1 has 4,651 registered voters; Pct. 2 has 4,130 registered voters, Pct. 3 has 4,094 registered voters; and Pct. 4 has 4,073 registered voters. In accordance with election law, Tshirhart said commissioners were required to review the county's precinct boundaries. Acknowledging those boundaries may change with the population boom, commissioners unanimously approved the the boundary lines.

Emergency Management Coordinator and 911 Coordinator Carey Reed said new addresses are "popping up everywhere" in the county. She said there are also numerous subdivisions with plats not yet on the 911 list.

Rodeo scoreboard

County Attorney Janna Lindig, representing the Bandera ProRodeo Association, asked the court to consider applying the cost of electrical improvements at Mansfield Park as an in-kind credit toward user fees for the Memorial Day and Labor Day rodeos.

The scoreboard, Lindig said, is outdated and unable to communicate with current software showing competitor information. She said the only thing the scoreboard can do is roll sponsor names during rodeo events.

"That old scoreboard is obsolete," Lindig said.

She said the rodeo would use a temporary scoreboard, however to do so an electric pole needs to be installed - an improvement that would also allow vendors to use the backside of the arena.

The total amount waived in 2021 is estimated to be \$3,635, and the remaining balance of the installation would be rolled over to 2022.

“This will upgrade the arena,” Pct. 4 Commissioner Jordan Rutherford said.

Commissioners unanimously approved the request.

EMS Training Program

Commissioners also unanimously approved a request from EMS Director Calvin Plummer authorizing an agreement with Peterson Regional Medical Center for a Bandera County EMS training program. Plummer said students going through emergency response and EMT basic classes would attend emergency room rotations to gain clinical experience.

“It’s a good way for them to get additional training,” Plummer said, adding with accessible service the county could reap more volunteers. The tuition for the basic course is about \$1,200 per student.

Monthly Reports

Plummer said for the month of March, Bandera County EMS received 221 incoming calls, and first responders travelled 11,870 miles. The average tone to response time was one minute, 61 seconds; the average tone to on scene time was 11 minutes, eight seconds.

Sheriff Dan Butts said the Sheriff’s Office received 531 calls for service and deputies travelled 22,952 miles. There were 6,774 dispatch calls and 1,291 911 calls. Deputies made 21 arrests - 12 felonies and nine misdemeanors. The average jail population for March was 68 inmates, 10 of whom were contracted from other counties.

Butts said the average response time has increased slightly, mainly due to three open deputy positions the department has been unable to fill.

“We’re shorthanded right now, we have to double up and people are working overtime,” Butts said, adding the shortage of qualified deputies is an issue facing law enforcement nationwide.

County Server Upgrades

The county is spending \$20,000 to amp up its IT department with a new server, after a Microsoft update caused an email outage among several county offices earlier this month. The server will tie to the main system so if one fails, the other will act as a backup.

“We should have redundancy and a failsafe plan - especially with updates,” County Judge Richard Evans said. “It makes you realize just how vulnerable we are.”