

**CITY OF LAREDO
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
M-2012-R-05
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1110 HOUSTON STREET
LAREDO, TEXAS 78040
MARCH 19, 2012
5:30 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present Mayor Salinas called the meeting to order.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Salinas led in the pledge of allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

In attendance:

Raul G. Salinas,	Mayor
Mike Garza,	Council Member, District I
Esteban Rangel,	Council Member, District II
Alejandro Perez, Jr.	Council Member, District III
Juan Narvaez,	Council Member, District IV
Johnny Rendon,	Council Member, District V
Charlie San Miguel	Council Member, District VI
Jorge A. Vera,	Council Member, District VII
Cynthia Liendo Espinoza,	Mayor Pro Tempore, District VIII
Gustavo Guevara, Jr.	City Secretary
Carlos Villarreal,	City Manager
Cynthia Collazo,	Deputy City Manager
Horacio De Leon,	Assistant City Manager
Jesus Olivares,	Assistant City Manager
Raul Casso,	City Attorney

Motion to excuse Cm. Garza, Cm. San Miguel and Cm. Vera.

Moved: Cm. Narvaez

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. San Miguel joined the meeting at 5:35 pm.

Cm. Garza arrived at 5:42 pm.

Cm. Vera arrived at 5:44 pm.

IV. **MINUTES**

Approval of the minutes of February 21, 2012.

Motion to approve the February 21, 2012 minutes.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Narvaez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

V. **COMMUNICATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS**

Recognitions

- a. Recognition of Dr. Joaquin Cigarroa for his fifty (50) years of distinguished health care services to our community.

Mayor Salinas and City Council acknowledged the achievements of Dr. Joaquin Cigarroa and presented him with a proclamation declaring March 19th of 2012 as Dr. Joaquin Cigarroa Jr. Day in Laredo, Texas and thanked him for all his hard work on behalf of the Laredo's community.

- b. Recognizing United High School Cheerleaders for winning UCA National High School Cheerleading & World Championship in Orlando, Florida on February 11, 2012.

Mayor Salinas and City Council congratulated United High School Cheerleaders and presented them with certificates of recognition.

- c. Recognizing Yesenia Carrera of Cigarroa High School for winning the 2011-2012 *State Powerlifting Championship*-Class 5A, 132.5 Weight Class.

Mayor Salinas and City Council congratulated Yesenia Carrera and presented her with a certificate of recognition.

- d. Recognizing Carlos Vedarte of United South High School for achieving All-State 5-A Academic Team honorable mention/first team all-district and all-city receiver for football.

Mayor Salinas and City Council congratulated Carlos Vedarte and presented him with a certificate of recognition.

- e. Recognizing the Players/Representatives of the Lyndon B. Johnson High School 2011-2012 Football Team, "The Wolfpack-The Jewel of the South," for being the first team in its 9 year school history to have a winning record in its participation in Varsity Athletics.

Rene Lara, on behalf of the L. B. J. community thanked the team and the City Council, hoping to continue with their success.

Cm. Garza congratulated The Wolfpack-The Jewel of the South players and representatives and presented them with certificates of recognition.

Citizen comments

Bertha Torres and Kathryn Ingram-Wilson from Gateway Gatos thanked the City Council for the support provided back in February. Mrs. Torres mentioned that on May 6th and 7th a mobile clinic unit will be providing services for cats such as spay and neuter.

VI. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMISSIONS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

a. Appointments by Mayor Raul G. Salinas to the Building Standards Board.

- Alan Jackson, Jr.
- Luis De La Garza
- Reynaldo Ortiz (Alternate)

Motion to confirm the nomination of Alan Jackson, Jr., Luis De La Garza, and Reynaldo Ortiz to the Building Standards Board.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Mayor Pro Tem Liendo Espinoza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

b. Appointments by Mayor Raul G. Salinas to the Laredo Housing Finance Corporation.

- Oscar Lopez
- Juan Gonzalez, Jr.

Motion to confirm the nomination of Oscar Lopez and Juan Gonzalez, Jr. to the Laredo Housing Finance Corporation.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Mayor Pro Tem Liendo Espinoza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Public hearing and introductory ordinance amending the City of Laredo FY 2011-2012 budget by appropriating \$160,250.00 in developer fees related to the development of La Terraza at Lomas del Sur, L.T.D., by the Laredo Public Facilities Corporation and accepting these additional funds, and authorizing the City Manager to execute all related documents in support of the same (Approved by the Operations & Finance Committees)

Motion to open the public hearing.

Moved: Mayor Pro Tem Liendo Espinoza

Second: Cm. Garza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

There was no public input.

Motion to close the public hearing and introduce.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

- Public hearing and introductory ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by rezoning .8 acres out of Lot 3B, Block 1, Lomas Del Sur Commercial Subdivision Unit 1, as further described by metes and bounds in attached Exhibit "A", located at 2110 Lomas Del Sur Boulevard, from B-3 (Community Business District) to B-4 (Highway Commercial District); providing for publication and effective date.

Staff is not in support of this application and the Planning and Zoning Commission recommends approval of the zone change. District I

Motion to open the public hearing.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Ruth Ynchausti was present to answer any questions.

Motion to close the public hearing and introduce.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Ordinance Introduction: Cm. Garza

- Public hearing and introductory ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by authorizing a Special Use Permit for the storage of flammable and explosive products on Lots 1 and 2, Block 2, Las Lomas Industrial Park Phase I, located at 101 and 103 South Aviators Road; providing for publication and effective date.

Staff supports the application and the Planning and Zoning Commission recommends approval of the Special Use Permit. District II

Motion to open the public hearing.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Liendo Espinoza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Arturo Garza, Mejia Engineering, spoke in support of the special use permit.

Motion to close the public hearing and introduce.

Moved: Cm. Rangel

Second: Cm. Rendon

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Ordinance Introduction: Cm. Rangel

4. Public hearing and introductory ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by rezoning 4.99 acres, as further described by metes and bounds in attached Exhibit "A", located approximately 750 feet west of McPherson Road behind 9114 McPherson Road, from R-1 (Single Family Residential District) to B-3 (Community Business District); providing for publication and effective date.

Staff supports the application and the Planning and Zoning Commission recommends approval of the zone change. Council District VI

Motion to open the public hearing.

Moved: Cm. Rangel

Second: Mayor Pro Tem Liendo Espinoza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

There was no public input.

Motion to close the public hearing and introduce.

Moved: Cm. San Miguel

Second: Cm. Vera

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Ordinance Introduction: Cm. San Miguel

5. Public hearing and introductory ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by repealing Ordinance 2008-O-206, authorizing a Conditional Use Permit for a child day care on Lot 10 and the north 11.57 feet of

Lot 9, Block 1055, Western Division, located at 4212 Flores Avenue; providing for publication and effective date.

Staff supports the application and the Planning and Zoning Commission recommends the repealing of Ordinance 2008-O-206. Council District VII

Motion to open the public hearing.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Mayor Pro Tem Liendo Espinoza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

There was no public input.

Motion to close the public hearing and introduce.

Moved: Cm. Vera

Second: Cm. San Miguel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Ordinance Introduction: Cm. Vera

VIII. INTRODUCTORY ORDINANCES

6. Authorizing the City Manager to execute a Termination of Lease and Bill of Sale by and between the City of Laredo, a municipal corporation (“Landlord”), and TOWER ASSETS NEWCO III, LLC (“Tenant”), to terminate Ground Lease, dated April 27, 1997 (“Lease”) located at 3019 Cortez, wherein Landlord leased to Tenant’s predecessor in interest, LAR-TEX Cellular Telephone Company, Inc., as authorized by Ordinance 97-O-064 and accept transfer of the Tower Assets to Landlord, effective April 2, 2012. (Approved by the Operations Committee)

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

7. Ratifying the execution of easement documents for the conveyance to AEP Texas Company the following tracts; Tract (A) being 15,945.15 sq.ft. of land, Tract (B) being 3,293.92 sq.ft. of land, Tract (C) being 2,116.27 sq.ft. of land, Tract (D) being 1,556.82 sq.ft. of land, Tract (E) 4,770.36 sq.ft. of land, Tract (F) 600.00 sq.ft. of land, and Tract (G) being 2,200.00 sq. ft. of land out of Lot 1 & 2, Block 1, City of Laredo—HR Plat, as recorded in Volume 30, Page 52 of the Plat Records, Webb County, Texas. Said tracts of land are more particularly described by metes and bounds and boundary surveys in attached Exhibit “A”. These easement tracts are needed for the installation of electrical facilities to serve the operations of the Fire Administration Building and providing for effective date. (Approved by the Operations Committee)

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

8. Ratifying the execution of easement documents for the conveyance to AEP Texas Central Company the following tract; being a 7,309.5 sq.ft. of land more or less, out of Lot 1, Block 4, Villas San Agustin-Unit 3, as per recorded Plat in Volume 30, Pages 13 & 14 of the Plat Records, Webb County, Texas. Said tract of land is more particularly described by metes and bounds and boundary survey in attached Exhibit "A". This easement is needed for the installation of electrical facilities to serve the operations of the future Northwest Recreation Center facility and providing for effective date. (Approved by the Operations Committee)

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

9. Ratifying the execution of easement documents for the conveyance to AEP Texas Central Company the following tracts; Tract (1) being 7,125.94 sq.ft. of land, Tract (2) being 141.54 sq.ft. of land, Tract (3) being 180.00 sq.ft. of land all out of Lot 1, Block 1, Baseball Complex Park at Jacaman Ranch Plat, as recorded in Volume 30, Pages 41 & 42 of the Plat Records, Webb County, Texas. Said tracts of land are more particularly described by metes and bounds and boundary survey in attached Exhibit "A". These easement tracts are needed for the installation of electrical facilities to serve the operations for the Unitrade Baseball Complex facility and providing for effective date. (Approved by the Operations Committee)

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

10. Authorizing the City Manager to execute the renewal of a lease, as attached hereto as Exhibit "A", with Webb County for its Head Start Program for the rental of the parcel described as Lots 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, Block 1302, Eastern Division, City of Laredo, Webb County, Texas, located at 2200 Zacatecas Street (formally 2400 S. Jarvis Ave.) for a term of two (2) years, effective April 2, 2012, at an increased amount of the monthly rent of \$616.00; and providing for an effective date. This is the site of the Tatangelo Head Start Center. (Approved by the Operations Committee)

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

11. Authorizing the City Manager to execute the renewal of a lease, as attached hereto as Exhibit "A", with Webb County for its Head Start Program for the rental of the parcel described as Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4, Block 321, Eastern Division, City of Laredo, Webb County, Texas, located at 2518 Cedar Avenue for a term of two (2) years, effective April 2, 2012, at an increased amount of monthly rent of \$900.00; and providing for an effective date. This is the site of the Jesus Garcia Head Start Center. (Approved by the Operations Committee)

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

12. Authorizing the City Manager to execute the renewal of a lease, as attached hereto as Exhibit "A", with Webb County for its Head Start Program for the rental of the parcel described as Lots 6, 8, the W ½ of Lots 5 and 7, the North 56' of Lot 4 and the W ½ of Lot 3, Block 912, Western Division, City of Laredo, Webb County,

Texas, located at 3501 Eagle Pass Avenue for a term of two (2) years, effective April 2, 2012, at an increased amount of monthly rent of \$893.00; and providing for an effective date. This is the site of the Villa Alegre Head Start Center. (Approved by the Operations Committee)

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

13. Authorizing the City Manager to convey title to the residential house located at 2406 Severita, which was previously constructed by the Laredo Affordable Housing Corporation with Home Investment Partnership Program Funds, to Neighbor Works Laredo for the purpose of making the necessary repairs to the unit and making it available as affordable rental housing to persons of very low income at 60% of median income in accordance with HOME program requirements. (Approved by the Operations & Finance Committees)

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

14. Amending Ordinance No. 2010-O-060, providing for a lease amendment agreement by and between the Laredo Transit Management, Inc., and the City of Laredo Department of Community Development decreasing the leased space at the Laredo Transit Center located at 1301 Farragut by 1,016 sq.ft. from 7,644 square feet to 6,628 for a monthly sum of \$4,586.58 and decreasing the Community Development's prorated share of the electric and water bills from 25% to 20% and eliminating the shared cost of the telephone equipment maintenance agreement. The remaining term of the existing lease expires on February 28, 2013. All other terms of the agreement will remain the same. (Approved by the Operations & Finance Committees)

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

15. Authorizing the City Manager to execute a lease renewal with Securitas Security Services USA, Inc., for approximately 120 square feet of office space and an exclusive office entry lane of approximately 1,020 square feet at the Lincoln-Juarez Bridge.
 1. Lease term is the one (1) year commencing April 1, 2012 and ending on March 31, 2013.
 2. Monthly rent will be \$3,090.00 for approximately 120 square feet of office space and an exclusive office entry lane of approximately 1,020 square feet at the Lincoln-Juarez Bridge.
 3. The lease may be terminated by either party with a thirty (30) day written notice. (Approved by the Operations & Finance Committees)

Ordinance Introduction: City Council

IX. FINAL READING OF ORDINANCES

Motion to waive the final reading of ordinances 2012-O-032, 2012-O-033, 2012-O-034, 2012-O-035, 2012-O-036, 2012-O-037, 2012-O-038, 2012-O-039, 2012-O-040, 2012-O-041, and 2012-O-042.

Moved: Cm. Rendon

Second: Mayor Pro Tem Liendo Espinoza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

16. 2012-O-032 Authorizing the City Manager to accept a contract extension with the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and reduce the FY2011-2012 Annual Budget in the amount of \$285,859.00 for a total of \$4,564,040.00 for the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program of the City of Laredo Health Department (CLHD) to provide nutrition education and food supplemental services to high risk women and children and extend the contract term through September 30, 2012.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2012-O-032.

Moved: Cm. Rendon

Second: Cm. Garza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

- 2012-O-033 Amending the City of Laredo Health Department FY 2011-2012 annual budget by authorizing the City Manager to accept, execute and appropriate revenues and expenditures in the amount of \$109,764.00 for a total of \$184,515.00 from the Texas Department of State Health Services for family planning and prevention services (fee for service) for the term from January 15, 2012 through March 31, 2013.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2012-O-033.

Moved: Cm. Rendon

Second: Cm. Garza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

- 2012-O-034 Amending the City of Laredo Health Department FY 2011-2012 annual budget by authorizing the City Manager to accept, execute and appropriate revenues and expenditures in the amount of \$100,000.00 from the Texas Department of State Health Services for family planning and prevention services for the term from January 15, 2012 through March 31, 2013.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2012-O-034.

Moved: Cm. Rendon

Second: Cm. Garza

For: 8 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

2012-O-035 Amending Division 3 (Rates and Charges), Article III, (Water) of Chapter 31 (Utilities) of the City of Laredo Code of Ordinances, specifically section 31-140 which provides for updated charges of fees and services charges for Temporary Fire Hydrant Meter Program such as Loss Damage of fire hydrants of \$3,000.00 and water use fee of \$1,000.00; non-refundable connection fee of \$325.00 for fire hydrant permits with a charge of \$8.00 per 1,000 gallons and a minimum monthly rate of \$310.00 up from \$185.00 for 1-1/2” size and \$430.00 up to \$225.00 for 2” size; cost of water line extensions for fire hydrants of \$2,500.00 per Hydrant; and adding section 31-140.1 Bulk Water Sales, incorporating the new fees and charges for water and effluent dispensers of \$12.00 per 1,000 gallons up from \$2.50 per 1,000 gallons for all categories of potable water use; and establishing a new effluent water sales of \$4.00 per 1,000 gallons for all uses; providing for publication and an effective date.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2012-O-035.

Moved: Cm. Rendon
Second: Cm. Garza

For: 8 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

2012-O-036 Amending the City of Laredo FY 2011-2012 Revenue Bond Budget—2009 Utilities Build America Bond, by appropriating revenues and expenditures in the amount of \$109,495.00. Liberty Mutual Surety, the bonding company for SLC Construction, agreed to reimburse the City of Laredo for work performed on the projects abandoned by SLC Construction. Total reimbursement is \$109,495.00.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2012-O-036.

Moved: Cm. Rendon
Second: Cm. Garza

For: 8 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

2012-O-037 Amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by rezoning Block 855-A, Eastern Division, located at 4502 McPherson Road, from B-3 (Community Business District) to B-4 (Highway Commercial District); providing for publication and an effective date. Staff is in support of the application and the Planning & Zoning Commission recommends approval of the zone change.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2012-O-037.

Moved: Cm. Rendon

Second: Cm. Garza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

- 2012-O-038 Authorizing the City Manager to convey easement and right of way to AEP Texas Central Company located at, and to serve, the Jefferson Water Treatment Plant, one (1) conveyance over a 0.8914 acre tract as described in easement conveyance attached as exhibit A; and providing for an effective date.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2012-O-038.

Moved: Cm. Rendon

Second: Cm. Garza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

- 2012-O-039 Approving the sale of airport non-aeronautical use land located at the Laredo International Airport to the Laredo Housing Opportunities Corporations created by the Housing Authority of the City of Laredo under Texas Local Government Code Chapter 303. The subject property consists of Block No. 26 consisting of approximately 2.058-acres (89,628 square feet) and Block No. 27 consisting of approximately 3.8039-acres (165,700 square feet) of the Subdivision Plat of Laredo Airport in the aggregate amount of one million thirty six thousand one hundred sixty five dollars (\$1,036,165.00); and authorizing the City Manager to execute all necessary conveyance documents; providing for effective date.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2012-O-039.

Moved: Cm. Rendon

Second: Cm. Garza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

- 2012-O-040 Amending Chapter 4, "Airport," Article III, " Minimum Requirements and Standards," Section 4-20, "Adopted," of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Laredo, Texas," amending Ordinance no. 1990-O-197, dated October 16, 1990, that established the minimum standards and requirements for the conduct of commercial aeronautical services and activities (fixed base operators) at the Laredo International Airport, as amended by Ordinance no. 2006-O-202 dated August 28, 2006, by amending Section II. E., providing for an effective date. (AS AMENDED)

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2012-O-040.

Moved: Cm. Rendon

Second: Cm. Garza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

2012-O-041 Approving the sale of airport non-aeronautical use land located at the Laredo International Airport to Laredo Housing Facilities Corporation created by the Housing Authority of the City of Laredo under Texas Local Government Code Chapter 303. The subject property consists of Lot 1 of Block No. 23 consisting of approximately 3.9 acres (169,747 square feet) and Lot 2 of Block No. 23 consisting of approximately 3.7 acres (161,129 square feet) of the Subdivision Plat of Laredo Airport in the aggregate amount of two million one hundred thirty five thousand four hundred forty two dollars (\$2,135,442.00); and authorizing the City Manager to execute all necessary conveyance documents; providing for effective date.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2012-O-041.

Moved: Cm. Rendon

Second: Cm. Garza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

2012-O-042 Closing as a Public Easement a 702.85 sq. ft., more or less, out of San Carlos Street and Valencia Avenue Right-of-Way. Said parcel of land is being encroached upon by the improvements of the abutting property being Lot 1, Block 442, Eastern Division, City of Laredo, County of Webb, described in attached, exhibit A; and authorizing the sale at the fair market value of \$3,400.00 and further authorizing the City Manager to execute all necessary documents to effectively convey fee simple title to Gerardo Zamarripa and providing for an effective date.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2012-O-042.

Moved: Cm. Rendon

Second: Cm. Garza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

X. RESOLUTIONS

17. 2012-R-019 Authorizing the City Manager to accept the Excellence in Policing Grant (EIP) from Overwatch Textron Systems, which are the providers of IMPACT, software used to simplify Crime Analyst Units and Investigators. The grant consists of the IMPACT Software at no cost to the Laredo Police Department as well as free training at their headquarters in Austin, Texas. The Laredo Police Department will only be responsible for twelve (12) months of maintenance for \$500 per license. (Approved by the Operations Committee)

Motion to approve Resolution 2012-R-019.

Moved: Mayor Pro Tem Liendo Espinoza

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

18. 2012-R-020 Accepting the conveyance of the following utility easement and temporary construction easement, for the 24 inch water main along Ejido Avenue Project, from:

4 V Holdings, L.T.D.—Utility Easement with corresponding Temporary Construction Easement as follows:

One over a 0.3571 Acre Tract, a copy of which conveyance is attached as Exhibit 1; and directing that the said easement (and temporary construction easement) be filed of record in official property records of Webb County, Texas. (Approved by the Operations Committee)

Motion to approve Resolution 2012-R-020.

Moved: Mayor Pro Tem Liendo Espinoza

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

19. 2012-R-023 Authorizing the City Manager to enter into and execute a cooperative working agreement between the City of Laredo Police Department and Serving Children and Adolescents in Need, Inc., (SCAN)—Violence Against Women for the purpose of developing community partnerships to coordinate services for victims of assault, domestic, stalking and dating violence in the community.

Motion to approve Resolution 2012-R-023.

Moved: Mayor Pro Tem Liendo Espinoza

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

20. 2012-R-024 Authorizing the City Manager to enter into and execute a cooperative working agreement between the City of Laredo Police Department and Serving Children and Adolescents in Need, Inc., (SCAN) for the purpose of developing community partnerships to coordinate services for victims of assault, domestic, dating violence, and stalking against women fifty (50) years of age and older in the community.

Motion to approve Resolution 2012-R-024.

Moved: Mayor Pro Tem Liendo Espinoza

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

XI. MOTIONS

21. Authorizing the City Manager to reject bid for the Rebid of Horizon Loop Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Project and authorizing the Utilities Department to complete the project with alternative solutions. (Approved by the Operations Committee)

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

22. Consideration to award a contract to FY12-043 to Monarch Office Furniture, Grand Prairie, Texas, in the amount not to exceed \$250,000.00 for the purchase and installation of furniture required for the new baseball stadium. After staff review of all proposals utilizing a best value evaluation grading system, it was deemed that Monarch Office Furniture provides the best value for the City. Funding is available from the Capital Improvement Fund. (Operations recommended item be sent to full Council; as amended and approved by the Finance Committee)

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

23. Consideration for approval of amendment no. 2, an increase of \$3,035.00 to the testing contract with Terracon Consultants, Inc., Laredo, Texas, for the North Merida Drive Extension Project for additional field and laboratory services required due to increase in the project scope of work. Current engineering contract amount with this amendment is \$71,020.00. Funding is available in the North Merida Extension Project. (Approved by the Operations Committee)

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

24. Approving monthly adjustments to the tax roll. The amounts to be adjusted for the month of February 2012, represent a decrease of \$15,340.54. These adjustments are determined by the Webb County Appraisal District and by court orders.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

XII. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve the consent agenda except items 31 and 35.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Rendon

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

XII (a) RESOLUTIONS

25. 2012-R-021 Authorizing the City Manager to accept and enter into contract with the Texas Department of State Health Services through the South Texas Development Council (STDC) for continuation of the Health Department's Housing Opportunities for persons with AIDS Project (HOPWA) in the amount of \$83,691.00 for the term of February 1, 2012 through January 31, 2013.

XII (b) MOTIONS

26. Authorizing the City Manager to execute a construction contract to the lowest responsible bidder, Closner Construction Co., L.C., Laredo, Texas, in the amount of \$47,735.00 for the construction of the Sacred Heart Waterline Replacement project. The construction time is twenty (20) working days. Funding is available in the Water Works 2011 Revenue Bond.
27. Authorizing the City Manager to enter into a three (3) year agreement with ALPHA Reclaim Technology, L.L.C., for the sale of treated wastewater; providing for the contractor to purchase up to 10,000,000 gallons per day at a rate of \$2.50 per 1000 gallons; and providing for an initial availability payment of \$25,000.00 and an additional pre-payment amount of \$25,000.00 towards the first purchase of treated effluent. This project does not require funding from the City. (AS AMENDED)
28. Consideration to award contract number FY12-038 for the purchase of safety footwear for city maintenance personnel to the following low bidders:
1. J.C. Twiss, Laredo, Texas, in the estimated amount of \$85,850.00;
 2. Mike's Western Wear, Laredo, Texas, in the estimated amount of \$10,363.75.

Contract pricing has been secured for boots styles approved for use by city maintenance personnel. Each department will have the option to choose the type of boot best suited for the work environment and budget allocation. All safety footwear is purchased on an as needed basis. Funding is available in the respective department budgets.

29. Consideration to award contract number FY12-026 to the low bidder Zertuche Construction in the estimated amount of \$125,000.00 for concrete repairs of sidewalks, driveways, and curbs as a result of water line break repairs made by the Utilities Department. All work will be performed on an as needed basis for repairs required due to utility repairs. Funding is available in the Water and Sewer Fund.
30. Consideration to award contract FY12-037, to the low bidder meeting specifications, Rochester Armored Car Co. Inc., in the estimated annual amount of \$82,480.92, to provide bank courier service for city operations. The term of this contract is for two (2) years. This is an annual contract subject to continued appropriation in future fiscal years. Funding is available in the respective departmental budgets.
31. Consideration to award contract (FY12-044) to Executive World Office, Laredo, Texas in the amount of \$282,082.90 for the purchase and installation of office furniture for the Fire Administration Building. After staff review of all the proposals utilizing a best value evaluation grading system, it was deemed that Executive World Office provides the best value for the City. Funding is available in the Capital Improvement Fund.

Motion to table.

Moved: Cm. San Miguel

Second: Cm. Vera

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

32. Consideration to award contract FY12-034 for the purchase of medication, medical equipment/supplies and gloves used by the Fire Department-EMS to the following providers:
 1. Primary vendor:
Bound Tree Medical, Dublin, OH,
 2. Secondary vendors:
Southeastern Emergency, Wake Forest, NC,
Midwest Medical, Daytona Beach, FL,
QuadMed Inc., Jacksonville, FL,
Henry Schein Inc., Irmo, SC;
PH&S Products, Minerva OH.

This contract establishes a fixed contract price for twelve (12) months terms and allows the Fire Department to purchase the needed supplies throughout the contract period. Approximately \$160,000.00 is purchased on an annual basis. Funding is available in the Fire Department – EMS Budget.

33. Consideration to renew contract FY11-043 to Southern Sanitation, Laredo, Texas, in the estimated annual amount of \$61,196.04, for providing trash collection services for large volume containers. These services will be required for various

city operations such as the Airport, Bridge System, City Hall Annex, Civic Center, Parks and Leisure, Public Access, Traffic, Transit, Municipal Court, Municipal Housing, Environmental Engineering, and Utilities. The contract vendor is also required to provide these containers for special events such as the household collection event. Funding is available in the respective departmental budgets.

34. Consideration to award contract FY12-045 to Radiant Systems, Alpharetta, GA, in the amount of \$91,611.04 for the purchase and installation of a POS Point of Sale System required for the new baseball stadium. After staff review of all the proposals utilizing a best value evaluation grading system, it was deemed that Radiant Systems provides the best value for the City. Funding is available from the Baseball Stadium Fund.
35. Consideration to award supply contract number FY12-041 to the following low bidders:
 1. Anderson Columbia, Laredo, Texas, in the estimated amount of \$2,500,000.00, for the purchase of Asphalt Type “D” Hot Mix with 1% lime, (F.O.B Plant) picked up by City vehicle; and
 2. Brothers Materials, Laredo, Texas, in the estimated amount of \$1,000,000.00, for the purchase of Asphalt Type “D” Hot Mix, (F.O.B Plant) picked up by City vehicle.

This contract is for the purchase of these asphalt materials required for all city paving and construction projects. The term of this contract is for a one (1) year period and is subject to the availability of funds. All materials are purchased on an as needed basis utilizing the Public Works Department and construction projects budgets.

Motion to table.

Moved: Cm. San Miguel

Second: Cm. Vera

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

36. Consideration to reject the two (2) bids received for the purchase of ready mix cement (12-040) for all service departments and authorizing that new bids be solicited. It is also requested that a sixty (60) day contract extension be authorized to our current provider, City Ready Mix (FY09-033) to allow for the purchase of needed materials. One of the bidders failed to complete and sign the vendor form and the second vendor did not submit the required certified laboratory test report.
37. Consideration to renew contract FY11-050, to Texas Land Reclamation L.L.C., dba: UTW Tire Collection Services, Texas, in the estimated amount of \$67,000.00, for the removal and disposal of used tires at the City Landfill and delivered to vendor’s location. Staff estimates that 1,000 tons of used tires will be disposed per year. Funding is available in the Solid Waste Fund—Contractual Services.

38. Ratifying City Manager's approval of contract with AEP in the amount \$54,411.79 to relocate electrical distribution lines between Marcella and Maryland Avenue for the Canal Street Drainage Improvements Phase II on a fast track basis. Funding is available in the HMGP (Hazard Mitigation Grant Program) from the Texas Governor's Division of Emergency Management (DEM).
39. Ratifying the approval of a purchase order/contract with Carrier Corporation, Austin, Texas, through the Buy Board Cooperative Purchasing Program (contract number 375-11), in an amount not to exceed \$227,962.00, for the purchase and installation of air handlers and related Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) equipment at the Health Department (Phase II). Funding is available utilizing grant funding from the Department of Energy, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program in the Environmental Services Fund.
40. Authorizing the City Manager to amend the City of Laredo's 2011 Consolidated One-Year Action Plan by canceling the San Francisco Javier Neighborhood Park Project totaling \$215,000.00 in 36th Action Year (AY) 2010 funds, and reprogramming the \$215,000.00 for the design and construction of sidewalks in District VIII.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

XIII. GENERAL COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

41. A. Request by Mayor Raul G. Salinas
 1. Discussion with possible action regarding vandalism occurring at various City parks and facilities, and considering increased patrolling of parks by utilizing the neighborhood watch and Crime Stoppers programs.

Mayor Salinas stated that in the past 6 months the City of Laredo has been experiencing vandalism actions such as graffiti, theft and destruction in public places such as parks and facilities. He also mentioned that the damages have been estimated about \$28,000.00 and that it is time to take action and prevent these unaccepted and disturbing issues by increasing patrolling in the areas with the support of citizens neighborhood watch and Crime Stoppers. Mayor Salinas also expressed that appropriate actions will be taken and responsible individuals will be prosecuted. He proposed a meeting with the County Attorney, Police Department and City staff.

City Attorney Raul Casso explained that when there is a minor involved in these kind of offenses he/she is to be under the jurisdiction of the County Attorney and they will take action and the appropriate measures against any juvenile criminal behavior. He also stated that it could be possible that in some situations the parents of these minors could be involved and prosecuted.

Police Chief Carlos Maldonado stated that the police officers have a mobile data terminal in their vehicles that provides exact information about time and location when an incident occurs in order to present an accurate report at their weekly meeting identifying all these criminal activities and this method has been successful. He also mentioned that a meeting with the Constable Department was held and that they will help patrolling the parks as well; both departments will meet in a biweekly basis sharing crime information, statistics, data and all other helpful information working collaterally.

B. Request by Council Member Mike Garza

1. Presentation and update by TxDOT Interim District Engineer, Mr. Mario Medina, on area projects and funding, with possible action.

Motion to table until the April 5, 2012 Council Meeting.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Mayor Pro Tem Liendo Espinoza

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

C. Request by Council Member Esteban Rangel

1. Discussion with possible action regarding the purchase of a basketball floor for the Laredo Energy Arena (LEA).

City Manager Carlos Villarreal stated he would recommend the purchase of the floor and that this initiative could be a good investment .

Javier Villalon, LEA manager, reported that the price could be approximately \$130, 000.00 not including storage.

Motion to instruct staff to purchase a basketball floor including amenities and support facilities for the Laredo Energy Arena.

Moved: Cm. Rangel

Second: Cm. Vera

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

2. Status report on contract with Santo Niño Park, with possible action.

Community Development Director Ronnie Acosta reported that in regard to the agreement between the LISD and the City of Laredo it is on the LISD Board's agenda for March 22, 2012 in order to get approved.

City Manager Carlos Villarreal said that according to the agreement LISD is in charge of the maintenance of the park.

3. Discussion and presentation by Frank Architects regarding the James and Maria Luisa Wellness Center, with possible action.

Cm. Rangel invited the community to the grand opening for the Haynes Recreational Center on March 33, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. He also thanked the City Council Members for all their support.

Viviana Frank from Frank Architects talked about the person who had the vision for this project, Hector "Tito" Garcia, a very active member of the community who has been part of very important organizations in Laredo such as the Laredo Main Street, Jalapeño Festival, Border Olympics, Sister Cities Organization and former City Council Member serving from 2002 to 2010.

Motion to name the Racketball and Tennis courts after Hector "Tito" Garcia.

Moved: Cm. Rangel

Second: Cm. San Miguel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

D. Request by Council Member Charlie San Miguel

1. Presentation regarding the partnership with KLRN and TAMIU to open a permanent studio for a new curriculum in the Communications Department to include TV and broadcasting programs.

Mario Vasquez, Executive Vice President to Station Manager of KLRN TV, expressed his interest in expanding the educational programs that they provide to thirty counties in Texas into the Laredo area, as well as setting up a local studio for production in partnership with TAMIU and hoped to get the endorsement of the City of Laredo.

2. Presentation by R.E. Lopez regarding an original musical composition, namely a "march," involving local music directors and talent, with possible action.

Mr. R. E. Lopez Jr. introduced a march that was written for the City of Laredo and it is entitled "The March of the Republic of the Rio Grande" as a positive exposure of our rich culture and heritage. He also expressed his desire of this march being adopted by the City Council as the official march for the City of Laredo and mentioned that this march was registered by a copy right office in Washington D.C. back in 2008.

Motion to adopt “The March of the Republic of the Rio Grande” as the official march of the City of Laredo.

Moved: Cm. San Miguel

Second: Cm. Vera

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

3. Status report on Kirby Lane, with possible action.

Planning and Zoning Director Nathan Bratton reported that they are looking at about 60 day project that should have been started earlier but due to issues with the private contractor it had to be postponed but everything is ready to start as soon as possible.

- E. Request by Council Member Jorge A. Vera

1. Activity report by Laredo Development Foundation (LDF), with possible action.

Nati Lozano, President of the Laredo Development Foundation, reported that several changes have been made in the last months restructuring the LDF in order to improve effectiveness and efficiency; refocusing in the mission statement, creating more new jobs and reestablishing the organization as a valuable resource of information for prospects members of the community. He also stated that new board members from different sectors of the business community and the education field have been added as well.

EXHIBIT A

YTD Activities Report

About the LDF

Incorporated on November 17, 1966, the Laredo Development Foundation is a private, 501(c)4 non-profit organization funded the City, County, and Members. We are governed by local business and civic leaders dedicated to Laredo's economic development.

The primary responsibility of the Laredo Development Foundation is to foster the economic and industrial development of the City of Laredo and Webb County.

The LDF is one of 26 AEDO certified organizations in the U.S.

Executive Committee:

President- Nativido Lozano - International Bank of Commerce

Chairman of the Board - Javier Garza
Vice President- Cristy Swisher - Swisher & Martin Realty
Past President- Alfonso Arguindegui - Arguindegui Management Co.
Vice President- Ivan Rodriguez - Union Pacific Railroad
Past President- Edward Sherwood - Falcon International Bank
Secretary - Bill Green - Laredo Morning Times
Past President- Tom McSpadden - Texas Community Bank
Attorney- Steve Whitworth - Person, Whitworth, Borchers, and Morales

Board of Directors:

Mayor Raul G. Salinas - City of Laredo
Judge Danny Valdez - Webb County
Lupita R. Canales - A.R. Canales Forwarding
Blas Castañeda -
Hermenegildo Gonzalez Elizondo - Association of Laredo Forwarders Agents
Daniel B. Hastings, Jr. - Daniel B. Hastings, Inc.
Jaime Loera - Rheem Manufacturing
Dr. Juan Maldonado - Laredo Community College

Mercurio Martinez, Jr. - Small Business Development Center
Rolando Ortiz - Killam Development, Ltd.
Tim Schmidt - Laredo Medical Center
Dr. Robert S. Sears - Texas A&M International University
Guillermo Treviño - Southern Enterprises

Strategy:

Leverage our strategic geographical LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION supported by our vast and efficient infrastructure, complemented by our young and growing workforce and a “knock on corporate doors” approach.

Targeted Core industry sectors:

International Trade Industry

Oil and Gas Industry

Manufacturing Industry

Retail Industry

Mexico Business Investment

Strategic Action Plan

Actively attract, recruit & assist International Trade Industry in the development new business, expansions and industrial park development

Actively attract, recruit & assist Oil and Gas Industry service providers for the Eagle Ford Shale in the development of field & related industry operations

Actively attract, recruit & assist Manufacturing Industry in the development Tier 1 & 2 manufacturing suppliers in Laredo and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico
 Actively attract, recruit & assist Retail Industry in the development of retail, commercial and mall development.
 Actively attract, recruit & assist Mexico Business Investment - “Business without Borders” Initiative

Prospect Handling Service:
 Confidentiality – Public relations
 Real estate solution assistance
 Market analysis
 Compile statistical and demographic information
 Perform competitive analysis for prospects
 Project pro-forma development and cost evaluation
 Advocate for local and state incentives

Prospects landed –
 1st & 2nd Quarter

Company	Industry	Initial Jobs	Wages & Benefits	Est. Capital Investment
Exel Corporation	3PL	100	\$13.13/hr. plus benefits	\$10,000,000
HPJ Industries	Bulk Bin Container Repair	5	\$19.23/hr. plus benefits	\$500,000
Southwest Industrial Recycling	Industrial Recycling	5	\$12.00/hr. plus benefits	\$500,000
Select Energy Services	Oil & Gas Service Provider	100	\$21.63/hr. plus benefits	\$8,000,000
Con-way Freight, Inc.	Transportation	50	\$18.49/hr. plus benefits	\$8,000,000
TOTAL		260		\$27,000,000

Active Prospects

Company	Industry	Projected Jobs	Est. Capital Investment	Prospect Land Date
NAI Real Estate	Oil and Gas	50	\$2.5-5 Million	2012
Katz Snapper and Miller	3PL Logistics	50	\$5-10 Million	2012
Allen Brown Real Estate	Retailer	20	\$1.5-3 Million	2012
Summit Realty	Transportation	50	\$5-10 Million	2012
NAI Southern Real Estate	International Trade	20	\$600,000	2012

Motion to appoint Cm. Vera to the LDF board of directors.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

XIV. STAFF REPORTS

42. Presentation of the fiscal year 2010-2011 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) prepared by the City of Laredo's Financial Services Department and audited by the Independent Audit Firm of Canales, Garza and Baum, P.L.L.C.

Juan Jose Garza from Canales, Garza and Baum; reported that an audit was conducted and three reports were issued. The first report provides an opinion on the City of Laredo financial statements and their opinion is that these statements are fairly presented in accordance to generally accepted accounting principles and it is the best opinion that an entity can obtain on a financial audit. The second report is about compliance in accordance to government audit standards. The third report is about compliance with the single audit act and both resulted "clean". He also mentioned that the fund balance as of September 30, 2011 is \$35,520,440.00 which represents a percentage of operating expenditures in the amount of 25.12 %.

43. Presentation by Eric Ellman on the continuation of the Big River Foundation initiative on the Rio Grande sponsored by the City of Laredo and approval of grant funds requested to leverage other state, federal and non-profit grants for the benefit of promoting our community, with possible action.

Jaime Arizpe from Health Newman Services Commission spoke in favor of this initiative since the Foundation has collaborated and participated with him and Colinas on several projects and events.

Nora Santos, Principal of Santa Maria Elementary School, supports this project and reported that it benefited over two hundred students from pre-kinder to fifth grade this year when they traveled to Lago del Rio and experienced hands on outdoor fun activities and learned about wild life, plants and recycling.

Paul Fey, Pastor of Christ Church, spoke in favor of the Grand River Foundation.

Carla Echeverria expressed her support to the Big River Foundation for protecting the environment and the river resources.

Eric Ellman, Executive Director of Big River Foundation, gave a presentation.

Deliverable #1

A New Bi-National River Festival
 Spring 2013
 Nuevo Laredo investment
 Nuevo Laredo security
 a new model for all river festivals

Deliverable #2

Quality of Life Improvements
 Project WILD cert. to all Laredo 5th grade science teachers
 Provide open water certification and kayak training for City of Laredo lifeguards.
 Continue to support local non-profits with outdoor fund-raisers involving birding, biking and paddling.
 Quarterly Community Kayak Races.
 Provide river and cross-border coordination on behalf of Laredos Riofest.

Deliverable #3

Funding for a Laredo Showcase Project
 To demonstrate how:
 Laredo law enforcement has made the river safe for ecotourism, and how ecotourism development complements homeland security's efforts.

Item	Total	Laredo	Other
equipment & supplies	15,000	3,000	12,000 (TPWD)
vehicle	7,000	7,000	(est. value donated van)
Gas	3,000	--	3,000 (TPWD)

Travel	10,000	5,000	5,000 (Meadows)
rent/office	9,600	--	9,600 (Rio Grande Plaza)
misc	5,000	--	5000 (Webb County)
accounting services	6,000		6000 (Carranco & Lawson)
administrative	70,000	25,000	35,000 (Meadows Fdn.) 10,000 (Fundraising)
	125,600	40,000	85,600

City Manager Carlos Villarreal stated that in order to be able to make a determination in regard of the money requested by the Foundation he has to take a look at the budget and see if there is any additional money available and meet with the president of the Big River Foundation before they come back to council with a response.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

XVI. RECESS AS THE LAREDO CITY COUNCIL AND CONVENE AS THE LAREDO MASS TRANSIT BOARD

Motion to recess as the Laredo City Council and convene as the Laredo Mass Transit Board.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Vera

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

44. Consideration to reject the five (5) bids received for the El Metro ADA Sidewalks and Ramps (5 Blocks—District I) with a construction contract time of fifty (50) working days; and authorizing the City Manager to revise and increase the Scope of Work, change plans and specifications accordingly, and re-bid the project. (Approved by the Operations Committee)

Motion to approve the addition of some additional streets on the north side of Pine street allocating reserve funding from the Independence park project.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Rangel

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

XVII. ADJOURN AS THE LAREDO MASS TRANSIT BOARD AND RECONVENE AS THE LAREDO CITY COUNCIL AND ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn as the Laredo Mass Transit Board and reconvene as the Laredo City Council and adjourn.

Moved: Cm. Garza

Second: Cm. Vera

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

YTD Activities Report



Laredo
Development
Foundation

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL



Accredited Economic Development Organization

About the LDF



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Person, Whitworth, Borchers, and Morales

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Small Business Development Center

Rolando Ortiz
Killam Development, Ltd.

Tim Schmidt
Laredo Medical Center

Dr. Robert S. Sears
Texas A&M International University

Guillermo Treviño
Southern Enterprises

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- Actively attract, recruit & assist **International Trade Industry** in the development new business, expansions and industrial park development
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- Real estate solution assistance
- Market analysis
- Compile statistical and demographic information
- Perform competitive analysis for prospects
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Prospects landed – 1st & 2nd Quarter



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Laredo Development Foundation

THANK YOU

Laredo Development Foundation



www.ldfonline.org

ldfinfo@ldfonline.org

(956)722-0563

616 Leal Street / P.O. Box 2682

Laredo, Texas 78044-2682

U.S. border cities prove havens from Mexico's drug violence

By Alan Gomez, Jack Gillum, and Kevin Johnson Updated 7/18/2011 2:15

... according to a USA TODAY analysis that draws upon more than a decade of detailed crime data ... ***U.S. border cities were statistically safer on average than other cities in their states border cities, big and small, have maintained lower crime rates than the national average ...***

Cross-Border Drug Violence Rages as Obama Mulls Pulling Troops

Written By Patrick Manning / Published December 19, 2011 / Fox News Latino



2009 GETTY IMAGES

Bodies hanging from bridge in Mexico are warning to social media users

September 14, 2011 | By Mariano Castillo, CNN

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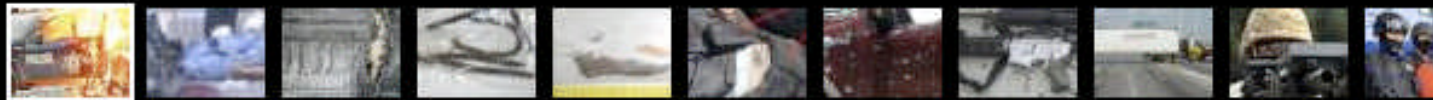
17,499 people recommend this.

Social media users who denounce drug cartel activities along the Mexican border received a brutal warning this week: Two mangled bodies hanging like cuts of meat from a pedestrian bridge.

A woman was hogtied and disemboweled, her intestines protruding from three deep cuts on her abdomen. Attackers left her topless, dangling by her feet and hands from a bridge in the border city of Nuevo Laredo. A bloodied man next to her was hanging by his hands, his right shoulder severed so deeply the bone was visible.



A man and a woman in their early 20s hang from a pedestrian bridge in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico.



On July 15, the Juarez drug cartel detonated a car bomb on the streets of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, less than a mile from the U.S. border. The use of car bombs represents a new tactic in the escalating street violence between drug cartels and Mexican authorities, much of it in the cities that hug the US border. (DHS)









River group is new nonprofit in city

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Laredo has a new 501(c)3 organization. The Big River Foundation, whose motto is "Healthy Rivers ... Healthy Communities," inaugurates with a poolside party at the Rio Grande Plaza on Friday.

The organization's featured charity this month is the Laredo Animal Protection Society.

"Kayaking is a wonderful fun way to get people to care about the Rio

Grande," says Big River Foundation Executive Director Eric Ellman. "It's even better with a dog."

Ellman and other volunteers will be teaching Laredo Animal Protection Society dogs to kayak Thursday at Casa Blanca Lake State Park.

People can meet the dogs, try kayaking with them and consider taking them home for adoption. "K-9 Kayaking" will be a monthly activity for Big River Foundation volunteers, working with new

dogs to acclimate them to the sport while reminding Laredo of the need to care for their dogs and shelter the wards of LAPS.

On Friday, local bands — many of which are scheduled to play at Jamboozle on Saturday night — will donate their time for a poolside party and fundraiser at the Rio Grande Plaza Hotel from 7 p.m. to midnight.

On Saturday, the second "Community Kayak Races" sponsored by Academy

Sports + Outdoors starts at noon behind the Lamar Bruni Vergara Environmental Science Center. Teams of racers can compete on behalf of their favorite causes in 1-mile sprints for \$250 cash prizes donated by L&F Distributing, Sames Ford and the International Bank of Commerce.

To volunteer as a K-9 kayak trainer, to register a team for Saturday's race or to find out more about Friday's party, call the Big River Foundation at 956-209-1879.







TPWD-sponsored Repair & Rides



LAREDO LAKERS



Photo by Danny Zaragoza | Laredo Morning Times

Humberto Flores and his son, Adrian Flores, catch a catfish in a lake between Laredo Community College and the Rio Grande on Saturday morning.

Residents tending to neglected land

By **ANDREW KREIGHBAUM**
LAREDO MORNING TIMES

Moisés Flores grew up blocks from the Rio Grande, near downtown Laredo. As a child, he spent much of his free time near the lakes between Laredo Community College and the river, he said.

"We (went) hunting with slingshots," he said. "Anything we could get, we cooked it."

"This was my backyard."

Now a resident of Water Street, Flores, 67, is taking part in an effort to turn the 200 acres of lakes and vegetation tucked behind LCC into a walkable park.

The project

The project is being led by Father Bill Davis, pastor of San Francisco Javier Parish, on Zaragoza Street. Davis says Laredo doesn't have enough natural

green spaces for picnics and other weekend activities.

Davis has gotten parishioners involved in clearing trails and picnic areas in a space few people other than Border Patrol agents have visited in decades.

"The people in the neighborhood, they just got excited because here they live in an urban world, but they can come out here and experience na-

See **LAREDO** [PAGE 10A](#)

SUNDAY, JUNE 5, 2011

LAREDO | Continued from Page 1A

ture," he said.

Davis is working with Tom Miller, director of the Lamar Bruni Vergara Environmental Science Center at LCC, to plan a series of walking and hiking trails around the lakes. He said he wants to preserve most vegetation as a home to nearby wildlife.

Flores, joined by his wife and son, worked to clear a promontory on the largest lake Saturday for the third week in a row. He uprooted a non-native salt cedar with his tractor while his grandson reeled in a fish from the other bank.

He said the lakes were open gravel pits when his family moved from Nuevo Laredo to Laredo in 1953. But the 1954 flooding caused by Hurricane Alice filled the holes with water. The area was mostly clear of vegetation when he was a child.

"You could see from here across the river," he said.

But after returning from Michigan after more than a decade in 1974, he said the riverbend area looked like a "jungle."



Local plans

City plans to clear the area for a park have never materialized. Residents are pursuing the project themselves with a plan from the Army Corps of Engineers, said Eric Ellman, executive director of the Big River Foundation.

The foundation promotes education about Rio Grande ecology through kayaking and other activities.

Ellman introduced Davis to the riverbend area lakes on a kayaking outing.

"He was pretty shocked," Ellman said. "If there was anything heaven-sent to change how people view Laredo

and the border, it's a 200-acre nature preserve."

The foundation has facilitated kayaking trips with the parish, the Laredo Independent School District nontraditional high school, Santo Niño Elementary School and nonprofits throughout Laredo with grants from the Border Environment Cooperation Commission and the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife.

San Francisco Javier Parish will hold a picnic from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday on the riverbend area just off Water and Mowry Avenue.

(Andrew Kreighbaum may be reached at 728-2538 or akreighbaum@lmtonline.com)



CLASE DE '10'



Fotos por Danny Zaragoza | Larido Morning Times

El estudiante del 4to grado en Santa María Elementary, Anthony Guzman, reacciona tras encontrar los restos de una flor Cat's Claw en Lago Del Rio, el jueves por la mañana.

Estudian en la naturaleza

POR NICK GEORGIU
TIEMPO DE LARGO

Aproximadamente 70 estudiantes de primaria exploraron el Arroyo Manadas el jueves, donde caminaron y aprendieron acerca de la vida silvestre, plantas, formaciones rocosas y el Río Grande, entre otras cosas. Para el final del viaje de cinco horas, auspiciado por la Fundación Big River, los estudiantes lo describieron como una experiencia divertida y de basto aprendizaje.

"No se sintió como estudiar. Se sintió como diversión", dijo Kristine Ga-



El alumno del 4to grado en Santa María Elementary, Mathew Duron, camina a un costado del Río Grande.



15 graduate from recovery school

By NICK GEORGIU
LAREDO MORNING TIMES



In its first year of operation, 15 students, who were destined to be drop-outs or in jail, graduated from LISD's small, experimental high school covering drug

Each will pursue higher education or join the workforce, Newsome, director of the school, recently being named interim principal of independent School District Memorial Middle

"I think we and beyond," she said, noting that a few other "recovery schools" in the state didn't have half the number of graduates in their first year.

Newsome attributed the success of LISD's Recovery Program to the individualized, one-on-one attention students received as well as the post-treatment support, largely provided by Serving Children and Adolescents in Need, or SCAN. Support included individu-

vice by the time they graduated.

A majority of their community service hours were spent with the Big River Foundation, a nonprofit focused on watershed ecology issues.

A majority of their service hours were spent with the Big River Foundation. "... they also got a lot of hands on in environmental science and a lot of exposure to different people in the community," Newsome said.

through an application process involving assessment and interviews.

They must also be drug free and have a desire to be sober and earn their diploma. There is a misconception that students are

through a or because led or suspected, they rarely. budget come need to re expand- rovery Pro- at 15 stu- graduates, led.

students the school in other seven have been admitted.

Meanwhile, Newsome said she is focused on her new position as interim principal at Memorial Middle. She said she enjoyed her time at the Recovery Program and will miss it.

"It is a bittersweet moment because I built such personal relationships with these kids," she said. "It was an honor and I will never experience this again, where you really

Earth Day, April 22, Academy Sports + Outdoors

Community Kayak Races

(next to the Lamar Bruni Vergara Env. Science Center @ LCC)

Race or Learn to Paddle. Win \$ for Charity

- 1-mile flat water course. Perfect for beginners.
(Ask about our free lessons)
- \$30 per person registration fee includes kayak, life vest, paddle, insurance, door prizes and ticket to that night's poolside barbeque and awards ceremony.
- Free t-shirts to the first 50 registrants.
- 1st place in each division wins \$250 for their favorite local charity.

SCHEDULE OF RACES

9:00 a.m. Sames Ford Scholastic Scramble
(School District employees & Students)

10:00 a.m. L&F Dist. Civil Service Shootout
(law enforcement, Border Patrol, Fire)

11:00 a.m. Hospitality Hustle
(restaurant, bar and hotel employees)

12:00 noon IBC's Laredo Open
(everybody else!)

for more info: www:BigRiverOutfitters.org
or call @ 956.209.1879





Photo by Cuate Santos | Laredo Morning Times
Joshua Garibay and Victor Hugo Garcia ride in a kayak with a dog from the Laredo Animal Shelter as they participate in the Community Kayak Party on Saturday morning at Lake Casa Blanca. The party was put on by Project Cupcake, with help from Cakeland, Big Dog Foundation and the shelter.

UNIQUE RIO GRANDE VIEW

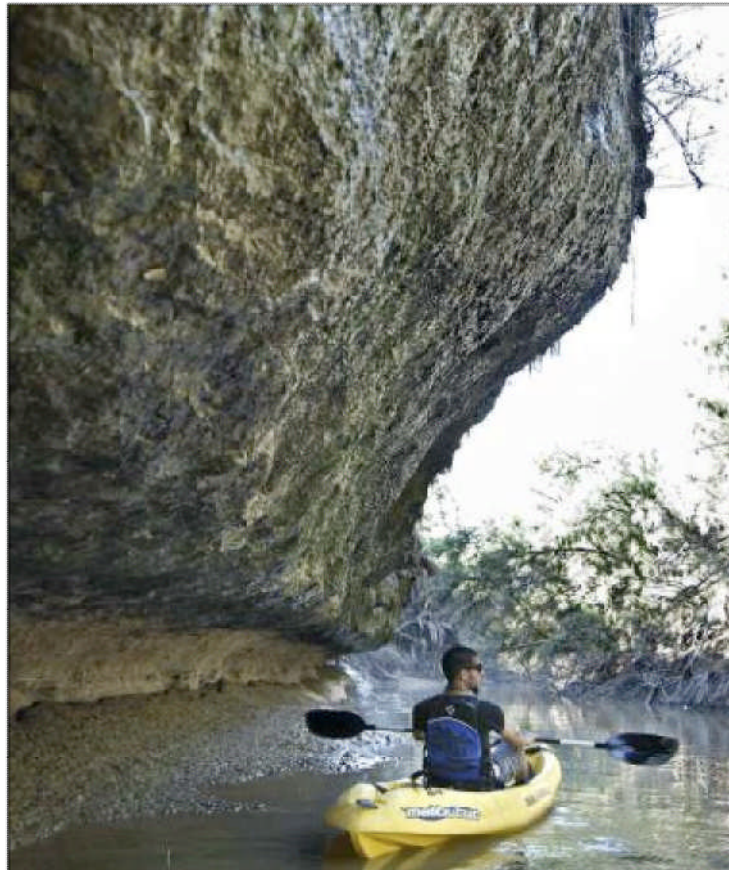


Photo by Ulysses S. Romero | Laredo Morning Times

Roberto "Chibbi" Orcutta kayaks on Manadas Creek as part of the Big Rivers Outfitters tour along the Rio Grande on Sunday morning.

Kayakers have new way to see the river

By **CÉSAR G. RODRIGUEZ**
LAREDO MORNING TIMES

At Father McNaboe Park, a path that leads to the Rio Grande is slippery and muddy. It represents quite a challenge for those who want to kayak in the international waters.

But nothing hinders the pas-

sion of adventurers who want to see a different view of the Gateway City.

A group of fellows dared to kayak 6 miles down river early Sunday in the Rio Grande, where strong currents and a few mini-rapids pump the adrenaline of any adventurer.

This is Laredo's newest at-

traction, Big River Outfitters.

Owners Eric Ellman and Steve Kaczor said they are working towards the best interest of uniting the two countries by the one thing that divides them: the river.

"I see the river as something

See **KAYAKS** PAGE 13A

PREMIERE ISSUE

MIXER

August 2011 Issue 1

LAREDO'S
NOT SO HIDDEN
TREASURE

CROSSFIT
TRAINING...
IS IT APPROPRIATE
FOR THE NOVICE?

IS **McALLEN** THE
CITY OF THE FUTURE?

A LOOK AT
**BARIBATRIC
SURGERY**

READING INTO
THE COMMUNITY
**BOOKSTORE
WARS?**

PHOTO BY Ernesto A. Perez

THIS IS LAREDO LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT



SAN ANTONIO MAY HAVE THE RIVERWALK, but Laredo has kayaking on the Rio Grande!

In the dry desert, it is a timeless channel of water that spreads life to countless communities. It has been called by different names through the centuries, in different languages and by different peoples that have been displaced over time. But its meaning has managed to remain the same—it is the "great river," or "life-giver."

The Rio Grande, or el Rio Bravo del Norte, as they call it in neighboring Mexico, begins as run-off from the snow-capped San Juan Mountains of Colorado and flows through Spanish haciendas in New Mexico's Rio Grande Valley, then passes through Pueblo Indian communities. Ranchers and farmers in Texas and the Mexican states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas, depend on it for their survival.

It was here, on the Rio Grande, that a boundary dispute erupted between two countries in the 1840s, leading to a costly war between the United States and

Mexico. In 1848, the United States had gained half of Mexico's territory through war and with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Idalgo, the two countries designated their new boundaries, splitting the town of Laredo in two. That same treaty also allowed for shared use of the river.

In popular culture, the Rio Grande is viewed as a place of illegal activity and attempts for illegal entry into the United States. In so many words, we could say that it is the front porch for various government agencies in both the United States and Mexico. While it is guarded by our governments, it does not belong to them. It belongs to the people who live on the border cities that depend on its waters for survival.

Many in Laredo cross the international bridges frequently. Citizens may see the waters of the Rio Grande and practically accept it as fact that the river is polluted and filled with disease. They may not see the river as an extension of their cities. It can then be said that in this city, the river, therefore, is not something to be respected, rather, it is to be

controlled and contained.

In 162 years, the people who live by the waters of the Rio Grande have never taken advantage of their rights to reclaim their river. For many who live by the river, it is something that is very much taken for granted.

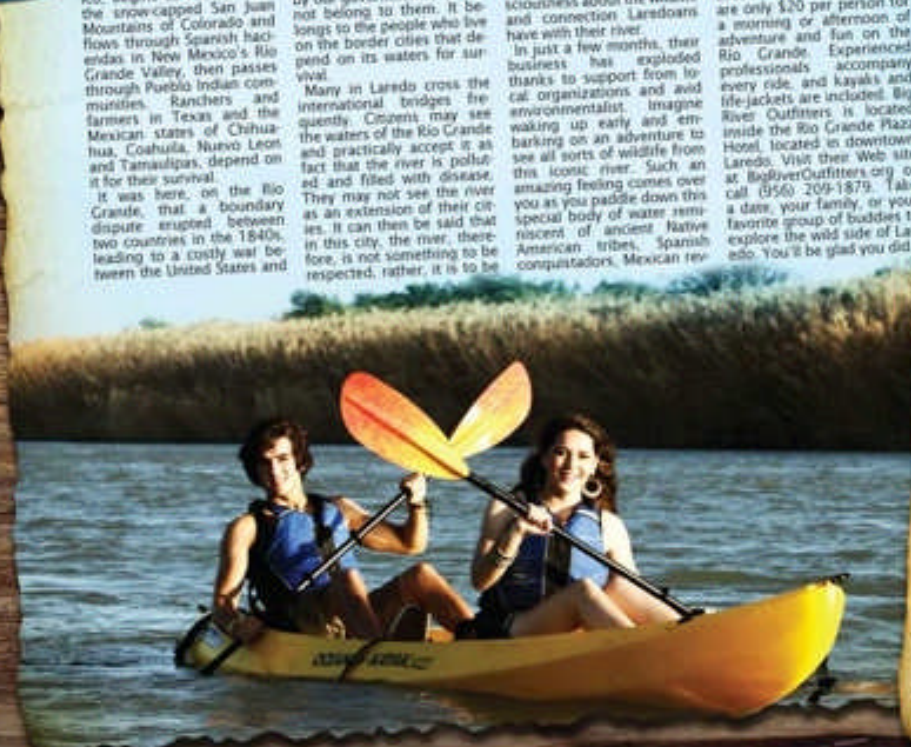
Stephen Kuzcor, who lives in Panama and New Yorker Eric Elman saw a diamond in the ruff when they came to Laredo. Partners in business, they have created what just may be the biggest thing in eco-tourism this side of south Texas. With its play on words, "Big River Outfitters," offers kayaking on the Rio Grande as a way to promote eco-tourism and spread consciousness about the wildlife and connection Laredoans have with their river.

In just a few months, their business has exploded thanks to support from local organizations and avid environmentalist. Imagine waking up early and embarking on an adventure to see all sorts of wildlife from this iconic river. Such an amazing feeling comes over you as you paddle down this special body of water reminiscent of ancient Native American tribes, Spanish conquistadors, Mexican

adventurers and American adventurers.

During our adventure of the Rio Grande, we saw no less than three Amazon Kingfishers—a rare bird almost never seen anywhere else in the United States. The water was clean, and we were amazed as to how beautiful and peaceful everything seemed. This is the view of the old Laredo, a city still full of culture, adventures and discoveries.

Priding ourselves on originality, Laredoans can say they live in the only city in the entire country, and quite possibly the only place in all of North America, where one can kayak in two countries at the same time. Rides are only \$20 per person for a morning or afternoon of adventure and fun on the Rio Grande. Experienced professionals accompany every ride, and kayaks and life-jackets are included. Big River Outfitters is located inside the Rio Grande Plaza Hotel, located in downtown Laredo. Visit their Web site at BigRiverOutfitters.org or call (956) 204-1879. Take a dam, your family, or your favorite group of buddies to explore the wild side of Laredo. You'll be glad you did.



"In a new nature ad kayak to hit the water and cast of
Laredo and V
We support kayaking and improve not continue of the Rio Grande to the Rio Grande. We as a city and enhance that has had down the river the beauty at Sander River Director of







Deliverable #1

A New Bi-National River Festival

- Spring 2013
- Nuevo Laredo investment
- Nuevo Laredo security
- ➔ a new model for all river festivals

Deliverable #2

Quality of Life Improvements

- Project WILD cert. to all Laredo 5th grade science teachers
- Provide open water certification and kayak training for City of Laredo lifeguards
- Continue to support local non-profits with outdoor fundraisers involving birding, biking and paddling.
- Quarterly Community Kayak Races
- Provide river and cross-border coordination on behalf of Laredos Riofest.

Deliverable #3

Funding for a Laredo Showcase Project

To demonstrate how:

- Laredo law enforcement has made the river safe for ecotourism, and
- how ecotourism development complements homeland security's efforts.

Budget

Item	Total	Laredo	Other
equipment & supplies	15,000	3,000	12,000 (TPWD)
vehicle	7,000	7,000	(est. value donated van)
Gas	3,000	--	3,000 (TPWD)
Travel	10,000	5,000	5,000 (Meadows)
rent/office	9,600	--	9,600 (Rio Grande Plaza)
misc	5,000	--	5000 (Webb County)
accounting services	6,000		6000 (Carranco & Lawson)
administrative	70,000	25,000	35,000 (Meadows Fdn.) 10,000 (Fundraising)
	125,600	40,000	85,600