

For Your Information

FROM THE CITY MANAGER & STAFF

March 20, 2020

Dates to Remember

March 23, 2020 – Special City Commission Meeting

Office of the City Manager:

Citizens, Business Owners & Other Interested Parties:

The City of Clewiston hosted a Facebook live event on Friday, March 20, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. to provide the community updates on various aspects of the COVID-19 or corona virus crisis evolving throughout the country. Participating in the event were representatives of the Hendry County Health Department, Hendry Regional Medical Center, Clewiston Chamber of Commerce, Hendry County Schools, the Greater Clewiston Ministerial Association and the City of Clewiston. The information was live streamed and is available for viewing any time for those who missed the live event by accessing the City of Clewiston website and Facebook page. The City extends its heartfelt thanks to all the presenters for the timely and reliable information they shared with the community during these challenging times. The City website and social media platforms are also regularly updated to provide additional information regarding COVID-19 as it becomes available from federal, state and local agencies.

My role in the Facebook live event was to give an update on City government operations and how services are currently being impacted by the COVID-19 state of emergency. Below is a summary of my remarks for your information:

City officials recognize and are deeply sympathetic with the social, emotional, physical, mental and economic impacts that the current state of events related to the COVID-19 virus has and are having on our community at-large, our citizens, institutions and businesses. The term unprecedented has been used extensively to describe the impacts and actions taken by government in particular, but it is accurate in the sense that this nationwide State of Emergency and the nature of the response is like no other experience.

This said, City officials continue to monitor information provided from Department of Health and Emergency Management agencies while also planning, considering and initiating proactive steps intended to minimize the possibility of the virus spreading into and through our community. This is a fluid situation we are collectively facing with change occurring rapidly and frequently thus the need for reliable information sharing with all stakeholders.

City officials remain in close communication with our Hendry County partners, as well as, regional, state and federal agencies and officials. City staff and I are in multiple daily communications with Hendry County Emergency Operations Center staff to ensure that our collective efforts remain aligned across jurisdictions particularly in terms of efficient continuity in service delivery to the community. As previously announced, the County Emergency Operations Center is currently activated and most recently the County has formally declared a local state of emergency. Following the County's lead, the City will take formal action on a City declaration on Monday.

*As for essential City services including **public utilities** (i.e. electric service distribution, water distribution and wastewater collection and treatment) **and public safety** (i.e. fire protection and first responder services provided by the Clewiston Volunteer Fire Department & full-time police protection provided by the Clewiston Police Department), the City does not at this time expect any disruptions in services related to this declared emergency. Of course, first responders and other City personnel will be taking all prudent steps to ensure their safety and the safety of the community in providing the services rendered during this emergency while adhering to federal and state advisories related to COVID-19.*

Regarding, other City services, some precautionary measures have already been implemented which limit or reduce the level of service in order to be consistent with emergency management and governmental advisories. In the case of solid waste collection services to homes and businesses, no changes in the regularity or scope of services have been implemented and will likely remain as such unless unanticipated circumstances warrant reconsideration. Library hours have been adjusted and other activities and service delivery elements are being reviewed with some limitations instituted which are aimed at minimizing potential exposures to patrons and staff. Recreational facility use continues for most services and facilities and will be monitored to ensure that users and activities remain consistent with federal and state advisories in terms of limiting group gatherings. Use of City facility requests are being reviewed on a case-by-case basis using the same recommended guidelines.

Public building access is likewise being adjusted to recognize recommended social distancing guidance to the maximum extent practical. All of these practices and considerations will be further evaluated based upon evolving circumstances and are subject to change. City meeting schedules have been adjusted and in most cases postponed or cancelled until further notice. Citizens needing city services are encouraged to minimize the need for direct contact through the use of technology and alternatives where available such as utility billing drive through services as an example. Other changes or decisions impactful to citizens will be shared through the traditional news media outlets, municipal websites and social media platforms as necessary as the situation further evolves.

In closing, regular updates from health officials, emergency management and other sources are being linked or posted on the City's websites and on the City's social media platforms in an effort to keep information and communication flowing. Please give us your feedback on ways that we can further improve upon this process. I thank each of you for taking the time to participate and for your support as we collectively work through this crisis.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in the City of Clewiston,

Randy Martin

Staff Reports

Library Director Natasha Hayes reports:

- **COVID-19 Advisory:** Out of an abundance of caution due to COVID-19, the Clewiston Library has modified library services and operating hours until further notice. The Clewiston Library will be open to provide limited computer and internet access, Wi-Fi service, research assistance and the borrowing of materials. For the safety of the public and staff, we are encouraging social distancing (approximately 6 feet to 2 meters from others). Other services impacted: All activities, events and meetings will be cancelled until further notice. Computers will be available to complete your Census form. Computer use will be limited to one hour per day due to limited workstations. We will not be accepting donations of materials from the public until further notice. For those who are unable or reluctant to visit a branch, you are encouraged to use our virtual services or call ahead of time to reserve an item and staff members will have it ready for pick up upon your arrival.
 - **Revised Operating Hours-**
Effective as of Thursday, March 19, 2020:
Monday & Thursday:
9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Wednesday, & Friday:
9 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday:
CLOSED

If you have any questions, please call the library at 863-983-1493. Thank you for your understanding and patience during this time.

- Over the past two weeks, the library was accessed for normal operations and provided meeting space for the community. There were a total of 28 individual meetings held.
- Library staff provided ready reference assistance to 231 patrons along with daily routine services which included circulation of materials, computer assistance, and programming.
- On March 4th and 5th we held Storytime at 9:30 a.m. There were a total of 28 preschoolers from Discovery Day, Little Disciples Preschool and Covenant Academy Preschool. The children also worked in the computer lab on the reading program (i.e., Lexia and abcmouse.com). These programs enhance and contribute to their fluency along with providing extra practice on the computers which contribute to increased dexterity.

- Lego Club was held on February 27th and March 5 with a total of 8 participants. Lego Club has been cancelled due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) until further notice.
- Patrons needing a quiet place to use the computer are welcomed to use the computer lab along with the computers located on the main floor of the library.
- The Adult Book Club met on February 24th to discuss, *How to Walk Away* written by Katherine Center, and select the next book – which is the BLOCKBUSTER HIT: *Before We Were Yours* written by Lisa Wingate. Come and join in on the next discussion scheduled for March 30th at 5:30 p.m.
- Coloring and Crafts was held on March 4th, with a total of 8 participants (5 children and 3 adults).
- On January 27th, we started offering FREE TAX PREPARATION with IRS Certified Volunteers providing income tax assistance. This service free and open to the public. Please call 863-983-1493 to book your appointment with any staff member.
- On February 27th our Annual Students of Excellence Awards was held in honor of Black History Month. There were a total of 17 students awarded and one community member recognized for their achievements in school as well as their service to our community. The evening was a large success as students were highlighted for their successes, motivational testimonies were told, musical talent was performed, and trophies/plaques were handed out to those nominated. A huge thank you to La Frontera for donating food for the evening and the Friends of the Clewiston Library for their donation of additional food items and decorations. We look forward to this event again next year.
- Need a place to hold a meeting? What about a computer lab to host your organization's/company's training? The Clewiston Library offers a classroom and computer lab with a total of 16 computers for use. For more information or to secure the room, please stop in or call the library at any time.
- If you have not done so already, please join our Facebook page (Clewiston Public Library) in order to remain up to date on the library's events and programs.
- The library has worked hard to develop a cooperative-wide calendar of activities, which can be found on our website (www.hendrylibraries.org) located under the Calendar of Events section. Here you will find events from all three libraries within the county. This is a great way to see what is upcoming throughout the cooperative as each library hosts different events.
- Upcoming Events: Movie Monday (Frozen 2) will be held on Monday, March 23rd from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., Art Show (CHS Students Reception) will be held on March 26th at 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., we will have their Art displayed until April 27th, Medicare 101 will be held on March 28th from 10:00am – 12:00pm. Additional events, locations and times are provided via the cooperative-wide calendar. Hope to see you all here...

Public Works Director Sean Scheffler reports:

- **Grant & Project Updates:**
 - After review of the “Welcome” signs, four issues were pointed out and are being addressed.
 - Work on the levee cut off wall has been stopped for a time while inspections and testing of the test portion are performed.
 - A survey crew surveyed portions of US27 and San Luiz, which is required for the proper location of the sidewalks on the south side of US27 from Wendy's to San Luiz

- and from San Luiz to Alverde. Sidewalks on the north side of US27 from McDonalds to Berner Road have a projected construction start date of FY 2022/2023.
- Staff is seeking ¾ of a mile of sidewalk through a FDOT SRTS grant.
 - The Ventura Avenue Rebuild Project is in design phase and scheduled for 2020 construction. The City's engineer is preparing design plans to accommodate under the road infrastructure before paving begins.
 - Other sidewalk projects included in the Florida DOT 5 year plan are being considered for the design phase. The City is in the process of reviewing priorities for future sidewalk construction and will be developing a 5 year plan for FDOT consideration.
 - After review of the plans for the new Clewiston Commerce Park sign, staff recognized architectural features were needed and are working on the design.
 - **NOTICE:** The County contractor is currently resurfacing W.C. Owen Avenue causing some traffic pattern alterations and delays.

Golf Course Director Robbie Rush reports:

- Get all information of what's going on at Clewiston Golf Course Facebook.
- Get on our E-mail list by going to the City of Clewiston website www.clewiston-fl.gov. Go to the golf course division and at the bottom of the page you can sign-up on Constant Contact and get all Clewiston Golf Course information.
- The Clewiston Women's Golf Association conducted their Annual Women's Invitational on February 18, 2020. The theme this year was "Shake Rattle and Roll". All the pictures and results are posted on Clewiston Golf Course Facebook.
- The Clewiston Sugar Festival Glow Ball Tournament was held on Friday, March 6, 2020. Jude Kurtz, Haitham Kaki, Al Perry and Dave Jackson won the tournament.
- The Clewiston Women's Golf Association's 11th Annual Rally for the Cure Mixed Scramble was held on February 29, 2020. All the results and pictures are posted on Clewiston Golf Course Facebook.
- The Clewiston Golf Course Couples Championship was held Sunday, March 1, 2020. Congratulations to Miller and Toni Couse.
- The LaBelle V.F.W. Tournament was held on Saturday, March 14, 2020. 80 players participated.
- The Presbyterian Nicaragua Medical Mission Tournament is scheduled for Saturday, March 28, 2020.
- The Clewiston Golf Course's Annual Horse Race Tournament is scheduled for Friday, April 3, 2020.
- Golf Shop Hours are 7:30am-5:30pm. The first tee time is 7:45am.
- Golf Carts must be in by 6:45pm.
- Walking is permitted all day at the golf course now. Tee time is a must.
- For more information, call the golf shop at 863-983-1448.

Utilities Director Danny Williams reports:

- **Electric Crew Activities (Week ending 3/13/2020)**
 - straightened pole at fertilizer plant;
 - removed unneeded poles on San Diego St.;
 - installed banners for sugar festival;
 - installed new pole with transformer on Alverde St.;

- changed push button for cross walk on Royal Palm Ave.;
- removed service to residence;
- installed residential service on Kentucky St.;
- changed photo cell on Sugarland Highway streetlights;
- removed vegetation from poles at two locations;
- installed bird guard on Olympia St. feeder;
- cleaned and restocked warehouse;
- changed cutout on Seventh street
- **Water Sewer Crew Activities (Week ending 3/13/2020)**
 - Repaired three water line breaks;
 - located underground utilities for by-pass pump project;
 - serviced lift station at ballfields;
 - changed out water meters;
 - installed new meter boxes at Sweet Villas.
- **Customer Service Department**
 - We offer several bill paying options; please visit or call the office at 983-1454 if you'd like to learn more!
 - **Please remember to register with CodeRed (Reverse 911).** This system allows us to contact you in case of an emergency or with other informational announcements. You may register by clicking on the CodeRed link at the bottom of the City's website page www.clewiston-fl.gov. You may update your information at any time through the same link.
 - If you are considering replacing your air conditioner or insulation, remember the City offers a **rebate program** for those items. Most local contractors participate in the program and can give you information. You can also visit our website at www.clewiston-fl.gov or call our office.
 - **Don't forget to sign up for your meter based surge protection!** Visit our office today.

PLEASE BE AWARE OF UTILITY PAYMENT SCAMS: Scam artists are calling Utility customers posing as employees of Clewiston Utilities and threatening disconnection of services if payment is not made immediately. Please be aware:

- 1) **Clewiston Utilities will NEVER request you to purchase money cards or gift cards to pay your account over the phone.**
- 2) **Clewiston Utilities will NEVER contact our customers on the weekend and threaten disconnection of services.**
- 3) **Clewiston Utilities will NEVER speak to our customers in a threatening tone.**

If you feel you have been a victim of this scam, please contact Clewiston Utilities to verify the call or the Clewiston Police Department and file a report.