



# ARANSAS PASS CITY NEWS

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Economic Recovery Official Linda DiMario

## ECONOMIC RECOVERY VOLUNTEER LOOKING AT DOWNTOWN A.P.

During the week of January 15-19 2018, the city of Aransas Pass will host a visiting expert who is volunteering her time to assist with economic recovery. Former Texas resident, Linda DiMario, Executive Vice President, Economic Development and Tourism for the Greater Irvine (Calif) Chamber of Commerce, has extensive experience in disaster economic recovery, tourism development, and downtown development. Prior to her position in California, she worked in Texas for years. Ms. DiMario was matched with the City of Aransas Pass through the economic recovery volunteer program of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). The program is funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Ms. DiMario comes at no cost to the City. IEDC is the primary membership association serving economic developers. During her week in Aransas Pass, Ms. DiMario will work with stakeholders on a vision and action plan for downtown.

*"The more vibrant, interesting and attractive, a downtown, the more capable of serving as a magnet for both entertainment features and essential services."*

*Linda DiMario Executive VP  
Economic development and tourism, for the greater Irvine, Calif.  
Chamber of Commerce*

*"Downtown is the heart of our City. The right balance of businesses can be a huge economic boost to Aransas Pass." Rosemary Vega, CEO Aransas Pass Chamber of Commerce*



## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL SIDEWALK PROJECT

This is a state project that will be a 10 feet wide sidewalk from the Aransas Pass High School to the City Library. This project begins in January and is funded by a state grant. Please see map to the left. Route is in red.

## HARRISON BLVD BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

Another Texas state project is the Harrison Blvd beautification work. It includes the planting of new plants, shrubs and palm trees along Harrison Blvd. This project is scheduled to be completed by late January. This area is highlighted in green.

CITY OF ARANSAS PASS  
T.A.P. PROJECT EXHIBIT



Contractor JJ Fox employees working on the Highland Stormwater project

## HIGHLAND STORMWATER PROJECT OVER 50% COMPLETE

The Highland Stormwater Project includes the removal of a failing stormwater pipe system on Highland Ave from Wehring Lane to Rife Street. The old storm system was caving-in and causing sink holes. The project is funded as part of last year's bond project. As of January 1st, the contractor was 50% complete and is expected to be completed by February. This project also includes the placing of new curbs on the South side of the street. When the contractor is complete, the City will pave the entire Highland Ave. from Wehring Lane to Commercial—also funded by last year's bond project.

## TIPS FOR GUARDING AGAINST PROPERTY THEFT

Property crimes remain an issue in Aransas Pass and throughout our region. With your assistance on a few minor details, the number of victims can be reduced. Key items to remember:

- Lock your vehicles and check them before you go to bed.
- Do not store valuables inside your vehicle; but if you must, store them out of sight.
- Never leave a firearm inside your vehicle.
- Work with your neighbors to look out for one another and don't hesitate to report to local police any suspicious activity.

These tips give you a 90% chance to avoid becoming a victim. For more information contact: Capt. Kyle Rhodes at 361-758-5224.

## STATE GIVES IMPORTANT CHECK TO CITY

To show the State's commitment to picking up the Aransas Pass portion of the debris removal cost, on December 21st, Texas Governor Greg Abbott presented Aransas Pass Mayor Ram Gomez with a \$99,000 check. This will be first of several. Other area cities also received checks. By the time it is over, debris removal in Aransas Pass could cost as much as \$10 million. By law, cities are responsible for 10% of that cost, which means our cost could be in the ballpark of \$1 million. That would be too heavy of a burden for most cities of our size to carry, so, in order to help Coastal Bend local governments, the state has agreed to pick-up their portion. Mayor Gomez expressed appreciation to the Governor and the State for helping to lift this huge financial burden. Photo by EOC Director Lynn Pierce







Aransas Pass Mayor Ram Gomez has been spending some time addressing Texas legislative committees about the post-Harvey temporary housing emergency facing the City, as well as the region. In Aransas Pass most of the apartment complexes were shut down by Harvey. Many of those residents still are without housing. In early December Mayor Gomez addressed the Texas House Committee on Urban Affairs about this problem. On December 20th he addressed the Texas House Land and Resource Management Committee. See above picture. Mayor Gomez is second from the left. Mayor Gomez told the committee that “our biggest problem remains to be a lack of communication.”



Members of the Texas House Land and Resource Management Committee toured Aransas Pass on December 19th in preparation for testimony during a committee hearing on the 20th of December in Corpus Christi. Third from the left is Mayor Ram Gomez. Also seen in his police uniform and back to the camera is Aransas Pass EOC Director Lynn Pierce. Development Director Katherine Comeaux is second from the right.

### **Texas House Committee Tours Aransas Pass**

In it’s search for answers on how the Hurricane Harvey recovery is progressing, including the issue of temporary housing, on December 19th the Texas House Land and Resource Management Committee toured Aransas Pass. Mayor Ram Gomez, with Aransas Pass EOC Director Lynn Pierce and Development Director Katherine Comeaux accompanied the state legislators. They looked at vacant apartment complexes with Mayor Gomez expressing frustration over the slowness from state and federal government in obtaining temporary housing.

## CITY GOALS FOR THE BALANCE OF THE FISCAL YEAR AND THE NEW CALENDAR YEAR 2018

The following is a review of some of the City goals, discussed so far, for the balance of Fiscal Year 2018 and the new calendar year. Many of these will be in the City's upcoming Comprehensive Plan.

- Aransas Pass will work at recovering from Hurricane Harvey stronger than before the storm hit.
- Begin the City's First Comprehensive Plan in January and include long-term disaster recovery goals.
- Work to improve economic development by attracting new housing and business developments.
- Complete much needed repairs to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- Rebuild storm destroyed elevated water tower by Dec 2018.
- Continue our success with maintaining the City's AA- credit rating following the financial challenges of Hurricane Harvey.
- The City Finance Department will work toward attaining the Transparency Star from the State Comptroller
- Reopening the storm damaged civic center and aquatics center.
- Continuing to work at improving communication tools with Aransas Pass citizens.
- Prepare and complete plan for downtown improvements
- Begin system for resolving flooding problems in low-lying areas.
- Work with City Code Enforcement to improve city appearance, health, and safety.
- Begin planning walking and biking trails in the City.
- The Police Department plans to expand public education programs in the upcoming year. The department will soon announce dates for the Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) program and the state mandated License to Carry (LTC) program. Both are free.
- Improve intra-office cost-saving communication and process flow for City departments by implementing new work order system.
- Add City Library content security system..
- Set up system for being more aware of grants benefitting the City.

## Contact Us

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### AQUATIC CENTER IS AIMING TO OPEN IN THE SPRING

The Aransas Pass Aquatic Center staff has started the process of repairing and replacing damaged equipment caused by Hurricane Harvey. Staff's goal is to be ready beginning May 1st 2018. FEMA and insurance funds are needed in order to complete repairs.

