

**Hello Marion Residents; I want to wish everyone a Happy and Safe**



**Thanksgiving Holiday**, this is a time we should all remember what we have to be thankful for. We should also reflect on the changes that have happened over the past year but in the same breath embrace the positives for us going forward.

**Dates to remember, December 3<sup>rd</sup> is the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony** in Downtown Marion, please bring your **Favorite Lawn Chairs** for this awesome event. **December 19<sup>th</sup>**

**is our second annual Santa Parade**, for more information please visit the City of Marion websites.

**Monthly Council Meeting;** at the November council meeting I gave an update to the council on the grant opportunities that we have applied for. This has been a long process and will continue for some time. I was happy to report that I was finally emailed the Doc-u-sign agreement for the \$10-million-dollar grant and I am now waiting for it to come back from the (GLO) General Land Office. The next steps will be as follows; once it is sent back to me they will schedule a Kickoff meeting where I will sign more documents. After that meeting Utility Engineering Group and the Grant Works will work together to engineer and lay out the sequences of all the projects and reporting guidelines within the grant. I also reported to the council that I received an email stating that we had received the Fast-Track Pre-Award on the CDBG-Texas Agricultural Grant for the Electronic Read water Meters. This is a \$350,000 grant that will help with our manpower, be more efficient and we will better at collecting and disseminating the data.

We have a new Public Works employee that is joining our team, Mr. Randy Clark. He and all the Public Works, City staff and Police Department are all great assets to the city to help the citizens of Marion.

**Subdivisions;** The City of Marion is not alone in experiencing the same situations as many other cities are in the County and State, which is the explosion of growth in the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) caused in part by the current laws and the added infrastructure being constructed. When you build in the City of Marion developers and home builders must follow the subdivision ordinances that we have in place. I consider what is happening in the ETJ's as reminiscent to the "Wild-Wild-West", under the current Texas laws when a developer and builder decide to build they are not required to follow the same rules that are in place within the city limits. Myself and the Marion City Council are doing the best we can to work with the developers and to come to an understanding on how their subdivisions will impact our city. I attended a conference in Houston given by Texas Municipal League (TML) and spoke to their personnel to make sure they are aware of the challenges we are facing by the current laws. I believe it is my responsibility to receive the latest information to help me in leading the city. I was honored to have been asked to be

a moderator for a class on the ways that the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds can be spent. The guidelines are pretty vague so I investigated further by calling several agencies including the Congressman Vicente Gonzalez's office and talking to their Chief of Staff. I was able to garner the information I needed and relayed it to the other city's personnel from around the state so they had a better understanding of some of the rules.

One of the best things I find interesting when attending any conference is the "Networking" that I can achieve. By doing this I was able to listen to other cities some large, some the same size of Marion or even smaller to hear their concerns and how they mirror ours. I posed a question to each Mayor or City Administrator I met at the conference. What is the single most comment or concern that you are asked in your City by your citizens? It didn't really surprise me too much but it was the condition of their roads. I spoke to city officials that were from Waco, Houston, Irving, Jourdanton and Palm Valley just to name a few and they all said the same thing.

Thank you and Happy Holidays! Christmas is right around the corner!

Mayor Victor A. Contreras

