

COASTING FORWARD: Water projects, beach upgrades on tap for coastal region.

By SHANNON DAUGHTRY | Posted: Sunday, January 1, 2012 2:00 am

With the beginning of a wetlands project on the coast and continuing efforts to spruce up Brazoria County's beaches, projects aimed at boosting tourism will be among the things to look for from the county's coastal communities in 2012.

SURFSIDE BEACH

It's in the name of this little village, and it's one of its biggest draws for residents and tourists. And in 2012, city officials are working on some additions to the beach.

"We're working on something with the land conservancy on the land that's being donated by Freeport LNG for the wetlands," Mayor Larry Davison said.

It's going to be a walking trail and will be an extension of the walking path from Stahlman Park in Surfside, Davison said.

The \$250,000 project could start in 2012, he said, and is anticipated to last a couple of years.

"LNG bought the land and donated it to the conservancy," Davison said. "We're going to make good use of it so people can have something to see and do when they come down to the beach."

Davison said the plan is to add additional restrooms so people can have access to that amenity when at the beach.

2012 also marks the start of construction of the elevated water storage tank for the village, he said.

"It can hold 200,000 gallons of water," Davison said.

Construction of the water storage tank is anticipated to take six to eight months.

"Once we have that storage tank, we'll be able to work on the quality of our water so we can start treating it," Davison said.

And while 2011 was devoted to recovering from Hurricane Ike, Davison said Surfside Beach will finish repairs on damage from the hurricane in 2012.

"We'll be finishing up the work on the road damage from Ike," he said. "We'll be working to finish those that weren't wiped out but those that were undermined and damaged."

He hopes the economy stays strong for housing and rentals at the beach as it was in 2011.

OYSTER CREEK

It should be a relatively quiet year in Oyster Creek, Mayor Louis Guidry said, but that's how the city's residents like it.

"We're pretty well stable coming into the new year," Guidry said. "We don't really have any new projects or anything on the horizon."

Because Oyster Creek is such a small city, Guidry said there isn't much out there to work on.

"That's just how we're set up," he said.

QUINTANA

Over in Quintana, the new year isn't going to see any fewer projects, and the city is hoping to make progress on some it has been working for a few years, Councilman Harold Doty said.

Keeping the beach in good shape and taking every opportunity to show it off is something locals take a lot of pride in, he said.

The city would like to add some additional portable toilets to accommodate growing beach crowds, he said.

"We're still trying to figure out a way to get our crossovers to the beach," Doty said.

The reason the city needs to work to get these crossovers installed is so people don't cut paths through the dunes where water could run through and erode quicker if there was a storm, he said.

"The other reason is to avoid rattlesnakes," Doty said. "I don't know too many people that would want to step on one of those when headed to the beach."

Doty said he hopes 2012 is the year the city gets generators for its water system.

"This is something that's been in the works since Ike," he said. "We really want to get these before another hurricane hits."

Since former mayor Wallace Neeley's resignation, the city still is looking to fill his position, as well as the position of the city secretary, he said.

"Hopefully we can get both of those positions filled and taken care of," he said.

Doty is hoping for the best in 2012.

"This last year was very difficult politically. We had a lot of problems," he said. "The island became very divided over the last election and I just hope we don't have to go through that again. I'm hoping for the best for Quintana and its residents in the new year."

Shannon Daughtry covers the coastal communities for The Facts. Contact her at 979-237-0152.