

City eyes its 100th birthday

By MICHAEL FREEMAN | Posted: Sunday, January 1, 2012 2:00 am

ANGLETON — The city of Angleton will celebrate its 100th anniversary this year, but officials there are planning to celebrate more than that in 2012.

“Just as I am every year, I love new beginnings and look forward to another incredible year for Angleton,” said interim city manager Patti Worfe. “We have so much to look forward to and are blessed to live in such a wonderful community.”

Worfe said city officials are especially anticipating new business endeavors this year.

“There are some minor indicators of economic growth,” said Mayor Randy Rhyne.

ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT

In 2011, the city witnessed slight growth in a number of sectors, including sales tax revenue.

“2011 was a great year for Angleton,” Worfe said. “We watched sales tax continue to increase.”

Angleton received more than \$3 million in sales tax revenue in 2011, a 3.22 percent increase compared to the prior year, according to state comptroller statistics.

Worfe said the city also saw new home permits steadily inch up to pre-2008 numbers.

Still those didn't help City Council keep from raising the tax rate for the first time in four years. Along with the 2.35-cent tax increase per \$100 in property value, the city also upped its rates for trash and water bills to combat rising water costs from the Brazosport Water Authority.

Rhyne said the city rate increases coupled with a trimming of the budget by more than \$1 million will allow the city to maintain services while saving for future infrastructure projects in the city's five-year capital improvements plan.

The city will also not give its employees a pay raise and won't fill several vacant positions this year, except for the city manager position, which was vacated by Melissa Vossmer in November. Rhyne said City Council might look to fill the position within the first few months of 2012.

BUSINESS

Angleton welcomed a number of new businesses in 2011 and will welcome even more this year.

Flowserve, a supplier of pumps, valves and other similar products, is scheduled to open a manufacturing site on Galaznik Road during the second quarter of 2012, Worfe said.

Other new businesses planning to open soon are Spec's Liquor and Popeye's Chicken.

This past year, the city saw Luigi's Italian Restaurant, Going's Barbecue, Tropical Treats, Duran's

Barbecue and Taco Bell open their doors to hungry residents.

3M, an international manufacturer for the oil, gas and transportation markets, also opened for business in the summer, bringing more than 60 jobs to the area, Worfe said.

Downtown businesses have taken advantage of facade grants to revitalize downtown buildings, Rhyne said. Worfe said several other businesses are planning to revamp their facades in 2012.

“We saw new businesses open and expand,” Worfe said. “I continue to be so proud of the resilience of our community and how, even through the tough times, they continue to believe in great things for Angleton.”

HOSPITAL DISTRICT

The Angleton Danbury Medical Center brought new services to area residents in 2011 and plans to promote those services this year.

One service recently installed was a digital mammography system. Hospital officials said digital mammography should provide shorter exam times, faster results and fewer false positives.

“This is a new and powerful technology for the detection and fight against breast cancer,” says Bill Allen, director of diagnostic imaging.

The medical center also is touting its outpatient imaging center, which opened in late 2010 but now is receiving positive responses from visitors.

“Hospital leaders thoroughly evaluated changing the level of MRI services provided by the hospital in relation to the needs of our patients and our service areas,” said Paula Tobon-Stevens, associate administrator of business development. “We were very pleased to be able to offer this service line in an outpatient setting as well as increasing it to a full-time service for our patients and our community.”

In 2012, hospital officials hope construction will start for the Angleton Medical Pavilion next to the Angleton Danbury Medical Center.

The 50,000-square-foot facility would provide additional office space, officials said.

DANBURY

City officials plan to focus on the approximate \$600,000 general budget this year and how best to use those funds.

Mayor Bill Turnipseed said the city aims to refinance bond debt this year in hopes of lowering payments by \$8,000 every year until 2023.

“We’ve got a while to pay,” Turnipseed said. “It won’t cost us so much in the long run.”

Turnipseed said the city finished last fiscal year about \$50,000 under budget. City officials plan to place those funds in reserve along with the approximate \$22,000 the city hopes to raise from a slight tax rate increase imposed recently.

“We’re not wasteful here,” Turnipseed said. “We didn’t raise it to spend. We’re trying to build our reserves up.”

One project the city plans to tackle this next year is a parking lot by the softball fields near Spur 28. Dozens of vehicles park in the grass near the road, Turnipseed said.

“There’s a safety issue,” Turnipseed said. “There’s no other place to park. We definitely need parking out there.”

On a softball note, Turnipseed said the city delighted in the Lady Panthers’ Class 2A state title they won in 2011.

“We’re very proud of them,” Turnipseed said.

Also last year, the city installed high-efficiency lighting and air conditioning units in City Hall and the library.

“It’s much brighter in there,” Turnipseed said.

100 YEARS AND BEYOND

Incorporated in 1912, Angleton will celebrate its centennial year this year, first by installing banners around town this month.

“We want to celebrate our history,” Worfe said.

No definite plans have been made for the 100-year anniversary, but city officials expect plans to shape up throughout the year with the main celebration likely coming in October or November.

“We want everybody to come,” Rhyne said. “It’ll be a big deal.”