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College Station making more public data available online

Story | Comments

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College Station's website: cstx.gov

US census bureau data on Mark Headd:

www.codeforamerica.org/blog/2014/10/14/small-and-mid-sized-cities-the-next-frontier-in-open-data/

Posted: Thursday, January 29, 2015 12:00 am

By Emily Wilkins emily.wilkins@theeagle.com | 0 comments

College Station data on everything from potholes to shuttle transit routes to where crimes are committed will be made more accessible to the public in the next several years.

Currently, much of College Station's civil data must be obtained through a request to the city. The open data initiative would make such information, including maps

and police daily activity logs, easier for residents and app developers to access, said Councilman James Benham.

"With the citizens actually being able to write applications themselves, they can help the city solve problems we might not even know we have because we haven't data-mined that information," he said.

Dozens of larger metropolitan areas including New York, Portland and San Francisco have opened large amounts of public data online in the last several years. Some city governments have taken it a step further, offering prizes and incentives for developers to create applications to make the data more user-friendly to the public.

Ben Roper, director of Information Technology for College Station, said it's too early to know how much the project will cost or how long it will take to complete. Costs in other cities have ranged from \$20,000 to \$100,000.

Some of the data is already available on College Station's website, but is scattered in various places or is not easy to access, Roper said.

"There's a lot of data that's collected for various reasons," he said. "Any way we can turn that around and make that available for citizens for transparency purposes or help them in finding information is a good thing."

At last Thursday's council meeting, the College Station City Council expressed an interest in moving forward with the open data initiative in the next fiscal year, which begins in October.

"You've heard from the council that we're excited about this," said Mayor Nancy Berry during the council meeting, "And we hope to see this in our future budget."

Only about 15 percent of cities with populations of between 100,000 and 500,000 have posted data online that developers can build off of, according to data compiled from the U.S. Census Bureau by Mark Headd, a programmer who served as the first chief data officer for Philadelphia.

But it doesn't surprise Tracy Hammond, a professor at the A&M Department of Computer Science and Engineering, that College Station is one of the first smaller cities to take on such an initiative. She said the data will give her students another resource to build on, helping them immensely.

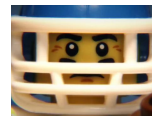
"You have a huge university here," she said. "We have the brain power of a much larger city. I'm not surprised we're on the forefront."

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Posted in Local on Thursday, January 29, 2015 12:00 am.

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- Court orders date for recall election of Hearne City Councilwoman Maxine Vaughn
- Brazos County Commissioners Court rejects appraisal district's new building request
- University of Washington President Michael K. Young named as sole finalist for president of Texas A&M

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- Kyle Field project might be sapping construction workers, driving up prices

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10h

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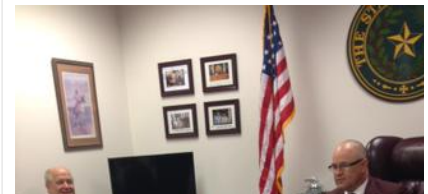
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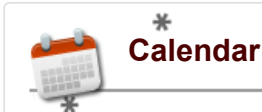
Chamber of Commerce just sat down w Rep. @KyleKacal this morning. Priorities include water, public education.

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Texas A&M Softball at SoCal Collegiate Classic

Fri, Feb 06, 12:30 pm CST
 Los Angeles, CA, United States of America



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📍 Gilliam Indoor Track Stadium, 171 Wellborn Road, College Station, United States of America

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An advertisement for Caldwell Country Chevrolet. The top half features the Caldwell Country logo in a stylized font, with "CHEVROLET" written below it. The middle section shows two men, Jon Hildebrand and R.C. Storum, smiling. To their right, the text "WE WANT YOU AS A REPEAT CUSTOMER. GIVE US A SHOT!" is written in a bold, italicized font. The bottom section contains contact information for both the Caldwell and Rockdale locations, including phone numbers, addresses, and the website www.caldwellcountry.com.

An advertisement for Hospice Brazos Valley. The top half features the Hospice Brazos Valley logo, which includes a tree and a house. To the right of the logo is a photograph of an elderly couple sitting outdoors and smiling. Below the photograph, the text "Let's Start Talking. Join the Conversation Now" is written in a serif font. At the bottom, there is a Facebook "Like Us" button and the website address www.hospicebrazosvalley.org.

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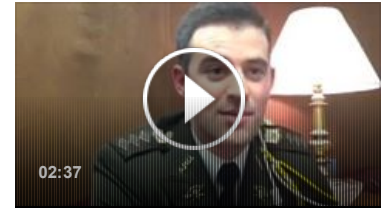
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A&M student body president Kyle Kelly talks about Orange and Maroon Day at the Texas Capitol.



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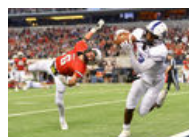
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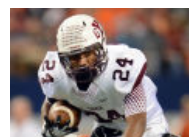
Halloween at
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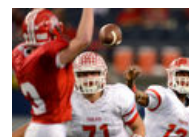
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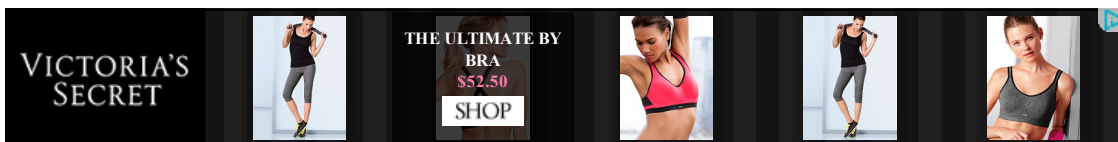
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