

Tourism Report to Council Meeting Date:

May 12, 2026

Council Members,

Please review the following updates regarding our recent and upcoming events, tourism operations, departmental strategies, and local Tourism and IT initiatives.

Tourism and Event Updates

The May Surfside Sunset & Sound / Historical Event required significant coordination across several departments and community partners. The Friday, May 1st portion of the event was cancelled due to weather and public safety concerns; however, the Saturday, May 2nd portion moved forward as planned. Saturday's event began with the live reenactment of the signing of the Treaties of Fort Velasco, followed by live music and community programming. I appreciate the coordination and support from Historical, Police, EMS, Parks, Administration, Robert Bradley, Michael Bailey, Oscar, Philip, Toby, Frank, William, and everyone else who helped make the event possible.

There were several last-minute adjustments, including Historical Re-enactors and participant coordination, the blacksmith cancellation, and ensuring that the historical participants were properly taken care of. After the event, staff also worked through the careful removal and storage of the stage covering to prevent mildew or damage. Thank you to Robert and Toby for their guidance and assistance with that process.

The Tourism Committee revival is also continuing. I have received one application and am working through the proper process to rebuild the committee roster. I also received guidance from William regarding Texas Open Meetings Act agenda compliance, specifically that generic agenda items such as "other business" or "open discussion" should not be used. I updated the Tourism Committee agenda using the provided template and submitted it for review and posting. Thank you to William, Oscar, and Shirley for their continued help as we work to restart this committee correctly. The next Tourism Committee meeting is scheduled for May 12th at 4:30 PM, and Independence Day planning will be among the items discussed.

We also assisted with community promotion for local events, including the Volunteer Fire Department BBQ fundraiser and the Salty Pelican grand opening and ribbon cutting. The ribbon cutting was coordinated with the Brazosport Chamber, who emceed the ceremony and provided the ribbon and scissors. Oscar, Mayor Zach, myself, and many Chamber members were present. It was great to welcome and support a new local business in Surfside Beach.

STR, HOT Fund, and Tourism Operations

The Deckard/Rentalscape STR management software rollout is continuing to move forward. Amber and I have been holding frequent touchpoints to help ensure a smooth implementation. The project officially kicked off on April 23rd, and the current projected timeline includes Address ID and Rentalscape

training, as well as the complaint system going live on June 3rd, followed by the STR registration portal and full go-live date on July 1st.

We have completed requirements-gathering meetings with Deckard, and the team is currently working through items such as existing tax and registration forms, payment processing options, and whether public portal listings may link to Airbnb and VRBO. As previously discussed, during the software transition, we should anticipate a possible temporary dip in revenue collection before seeing improvement as the system becomes fully implemented and adopted.

The HOT fund budget work has made great strides. I worked closely with Finance to help get the Hotel budget approved and to establish a stronger and more sustainable funding structure for Tourism. Christie also provided the April month-to-month budget analysis, which is extremely helpful for tracking revenue and expenses more clearly. Thank you to Christie, Mindy, William, Oscar, Amber, and Council for the continued guidance and support as we work to strengthen the Hotel fund and tourism operations.

In preparation for future budget workshops, I have also been asked to begin identifying marketing needs for tourism and economic development. I will be working with Oscar and the Tourism Committee to outline options ranging from day-to-day marketing support to larger strategic goals. I will also be reviewing marketing firms, cooperative advertising opportunities, and purchasing cooperatives so that we can review multiple pricing tiers and options, I want the tourism committee and council to be able to make informed decisions and clearly see our options. We have also received tourism advertising connections through Texas Travel Alliance, including opportunities related to Travel Texas co-op advertising and Texas Monthly.

IT and Administrative Initiatives

The ADA website compliance initiative remains ongoing. We are continuing to work toward ensuring that city documents posted online are accessible and meet the Department of Justice's new ADA web accessibility requirements. Several directors have already begun submitting documents in improved formats, and I believe continued forward progress is the key. This will take time, but we are moving in the right direction.

Website updates continue as departments provide new information. Public Works requested that CCR documents be added under Public Notices and separated for easier public access, which has been completed. HR requested that a job posting be added to the employment page, and that was posted on May 4th. General website cleanup and departmental updates remain ongoing. When questions arise regarding legal posting requirements or appropriate public links, I am seeking legal guidance from Patton when necessary.

I also continued working on the city phone system. After completing the phone system audit, I polled directors regarding calls that reached the wrong department. The feedback showed that many callers simply press random numbers in an attempt to reach a person. Based on that feedback, I have been working on making certain options clearer, including court-related calls and Police Department routing. I also worked with Chief Hester on the Police Department phone recording and website phone number, and those updates have been made.

Timekeeping support is continuing as we work to bring the QuickBooks timekeeping system back online and make it easier for staff to track time. Employees are being enrolled department by department, including work with EMS and Public Works. I am coordinating with Finance when QuickBooks Desktop changes are needed before updates can be made. Directors should continue coordinating with me to enroll their employees. For now, staff should continue using paper as a backup while the system is being fully implemented. Thank you to Janet, Christie, Mindy, and the department directors for their help and patience during this rollout.

Cybersecurity and Technical Support

Mandatory AI and cybersecurity training is being rolled out to municipal staff to support compliance with Texas Government Code Section 2054.5191. I will need continued assistance with tracking completion and compliance as we move through that process. I have also been providing input on internal AI policy revisions to help ensure the city can use new technology appropriately, safely, and in compliance with applicable requirements.

Cybersecurity awareness remains important. Finance flagged a phishing attempt involving a fake invoice, and I also reviewed other caution-worthy items, including a Facebook Business Manager partner request that included warnings about only approving known and trusted partners and never sharing passwords or payment information. These are good reminders that staff should continue to be cautious with invoices, account access, login requests, and unfamiliar online business tools.

Clover/Fiserv POS issues are still being worked through. I have continued communicating with Clover/Fiserv regarding replacement devices, lease questions, and the need for our contract to accurately reflect the Village's operational needs. I also worked with Toby, Christie, and William to help ensure we have enough POS devices available for beach booth workers during the busy season. I have made clear to Clover/Fiserv that we cannot sign a newly proposed contract as-is if it does not meet our current municipal needs.

General IT support continues daily. Recent work included onboarding a new employee for the evidence room, setting up computer, printer, phone, and email access; assisting with EMS Microsoft account cleanup; helping prepare the chambers for the Moonshot Missions presentation; fixing a court printer; repairing a phone for the sewer crew; replacing equipment for Ray; assisting Erick, Josh, Public Works, Finance, and others with various technical issues; and handling routine password resets, equipment setup, printer issues, email support, and other day-to-day IT needs as they arise.

I also continue to look for cost savings and process improvements where possible, including phone system cleanup, Microsoft account consolidation, email consolidation, and helping staff better use the tools we already have.

Regular coordination has continued through daily tourism huddles, leadership meetings, STR/CSR meetings, event planning meetings, and project-specific meetings. I also appreciated the opportunity to participate in the tour of the Surfside Beach Historical Area with William, organized by Robert Bradley.

I greatly value the opportunity to work with the people of Surfside Beach and remain open to hearing the Council's and citizens' ideas regarding the future of our Tourism and IT departments.

~David Calhoun Tourism/IT Director

