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## **Preparing For Open Enrollment**

Every year the City of Big Spring distributes insurance open enrollment notifications to all employees. Unfortunately, many employees make the mistake of not taking the time to examine these materials. Open enrollment is the time to look over available insurance options. The choices made during this period will determine the health care benefits that the employee is entitled to for the next year as well as the cost for this coverage.

The open enrollment period for insurance is offered to all City of Big Spring employees during the month of September. During open enrollment, employees can make changes to their insurance coverage, i.e. health, dental and life. Employees are encouraged to look carefully at all of the available insurance plan options before deciding to change coverage options.

All employees will be required to attend an Open Enrollment meeting to complete the necessary paperwork for the upcoming plan year. Employees will be required to sign off on any changes made to their coverage. Employees will also be required to sign a confirmation if they do not wish to make any changes in their coverage.

Prior to Open Enrollment, every city department will be given an assigned meeting time. We ask that employees and supervisors attempt to make arrangements to allow employees to attend each department's scheduled meeting. If an employee is unable to attend his or her department's assigned block of time, he or she should contact the Human Resources office to reschedule. **ALL EMPLOYEES ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND OPEN ENROLLMENT REGARDLESS OF CHANGES BEING MADE.**

**Question:** What can employees do during open enrollment?

**Answer:** The open enrollment period offers employees the opportunity to make changes to their insurance benefits including:

- Health insurance
- Dental insurance
- Life Insurance
- Flex plan
- AFLAC

During open enrollment employees can:

- Add coverage
- Terminate coverage
- Make changes to an existing policy

If employees do not make the desired changes during open enrollment, you may not be able to make those changes until open enrollment the following year. Employees must have a "qualifying event" to make any changes to benefit coverages outside of open enrollment.

**Question:** What is a "qualifying event?"

**Answer:** A qualifying event is an occurrence that dramatically changes the employee's insurance needs. The purpose of a qualifying event clause is to allow adjustments to your insurance coverage to accommodate significant changes without waiting until the next annual enrollment period. The following are common qualifying events:

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Birth of a child
- A spouse's loss of employment
- Death of a dependent
- Adoption

*(Continued on page 2)*



## Preparing For Open Enrollment

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Generally, employees must report the qualifying event to Human Resources and make any necessary changes within sixty (60) days of the event.

**Question:** Where can I get information on the benefits I currently have?

**Answer:** Benefits information (current enrollment, premiums, etc.) is available in the Human Resources office in City Hall or by calling the Benefits Coordinator at 264-2347. Any changes to health, dental or life insurance coverage must be made in person in the Human Resources office.

It is recommended that employees research their coverage ahead of time to prepare for open enrollment. The Human Resources office can tell you what benefits you currently have and what you pay for those benefits. If you are thinking of adding benefits, the Human Resources office can calculate how changes in benefits can affect the employee's portion of premiums.

**Question:** What optional benefits are available to City employees?

**Answer:**

- Dependent health insurance
- Dental insurance
- Additional life insurance
- Flexible spending account
- AFLAC

**Question:** What should I do to prepare for open enrollment?

**Answer:** Research. The employee should thoroughly review current benefits information and his/her family's health care expenses over the last year. Having the right information will allow the employee to assess the value of the plans offered based on the cost of premiums, the amount of required co-pays, and anticipated annual spending and his/her family's current situation.

It's estimated that over 68 million Americans have no life insurance. Fortunately, city employees are covered under the employer provided life insurance policy, but each employee should check that the coverage amounts are sufficient and verify the beneficiaries listed to make sure his/her family is financially protected in case of death. Additional life insurance options are available to employees.

**Question:** If I add or cancel coverage, when do those changes take effect?

**Answer:** Changes made during open enrollment will take effect on October 1, 2012.



We are pleased to congratulate Lt. Craig Ferguson, Kelly Grant, Lt. Jay Holt and Stacie King on their successful completion of the 2011-2012 "Leadership Big Spring Program." The program is sponsored by the Big Spring Chamber of Commerce and allows participants to experience a personal growth in leadership. Throughout the year, participants are able to see, firsthand, the importance of economic and community development, the city and county government at work, as well as the assets that our community offers through various businesses.

One of the main requirements for graduation from Leadership is completion of a group project. This year, the group class decided to install new playground equipment at Comanche Trail Park. The group removed the old slide and swing set near the duck feeding area and installed new playground equipment that was donated by the City of Big Spring. The class also resurfaced and repainted the existing picnic tables around the playground with lumber and supplies donated by Harris Ace Hardware.

Lt. Craig Ferguson is the Operations Manager for the Big Spring Fire Department. Kelly Grant is the Airport Administrative Assistant, Lt. Jay Holt is a member of the Big Spring Fire Department and Stacie King is the Benefits Coordinator for the City of Big Spring. Congratulations to all of you on a job well done!

City of Big Spring employee ID Cards will now be processed in the Human Resources office. If an employee is in need of a replacement ID card, please call 264-2346 or email [lpge@mybigspring.com](mailto:lpge@mybigspring.com) to schedule an appointment.

**CONGRATULATIONS  
ON YOUR RETIREMENT**

**Neil Anderson**

*Streets - 33 years of service*

**Robert Langford**

*Water Office - 19 years of service*



Mary Malone will be at the Big Spring City Council Chambers on Wednesday, July 18, 2012, to provide information about the medical membership program with Air Evac Lifeteam (AEL). Interested City of Big Spring employees can attend one of three scheduled meetings. The first meeting will begin at 9 a.m., the second will begin at 11 a.m. and the last meeting will begin at 2 p.m.

Air Evac Lifeteam works in cooperation with our local emergency responders. They are on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to respond to medical emergencies. Air Evac Lifeteam offers memberships that provide prepaid protection against AEL air ambulance costs not normally covered by a member's insurance or medical benefits. Annual membership fees are as follows:

- \$50/year for a 1 member household
- \$55/year for a 2 member household
- \$60/year for a 3 or more member household

**Annual membership fees will be paid by the employee.** At each meeting, employees will be given the enrollment options and have the opportunity to ask questions. Those employees who wish to enroll can do so at the meeting and make payment at that time. (Payroll deduction will not be an option.)

Please feel free to contact Human Resources at 264-2347 if you have any questions.

The annual **City of Big Spring Employee Appreciation Picnic** will be held on Friday, August 31, 2012 at the Dora Roberts Community Center. Lunch will be served at 12 p.m. followed by the presentation of employee service awards and the awards for the employees of the year. Door prizes will be given but you must be present or on duty to be eligible for door prizes. All employees and their spouse are invited to attend.



**New DPS Patrol Vessel Named For Troy M. Hogue**

Several members of the Big Spring Police Department were in attendance at the State Capitol for the commission of the newest patrol vessel used by the Department of Public Safety. On June 14, 2012, DPS commissioned the



Troy Hogue at a ceremony in Austin. The vessel is named for Troy M. Hogue, a West Texas trooper who was killed in the line of duty. Hogue was stationed in Big Spring in December 1994 when he was shot and killed by a DWI suspect after a traffic wreck on Interstate 20.

"Trooper Hogue died serving and protecting the people of Texas, and this boat, which is named in his honor, will continue his legacy, protecting the people of Texas from violent drug traffickers and other criminals," said DPS Director Steven McCraw.

The Troy Hogue will mainly patrol the Rio Grande. It's the agency's fourth 34-foot shallow water interceptor available for patrol along the border with Mexico. These patrol vessels and the recently formed Tactical Marine Unit are enhancing the DPS's ability to combat illegal activity along the Texas coast and Rio Grande River.



**IT'S POLICY... ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE NO. 25 – PARKING OF TAKE HOME CITY VEHICLES**

Parking City vehicles on grassy areas around their home projects a negative image to the public and will not be tolerated. If an employee takes a City vehicle home, they must park it in a driveway, street or other non-grassy area. The policy of allowing employees to take their vehicles home is a *privilege* for the employee's convenience. Failure to park City vehicles appropriately may lead to the privilege being revoked.

SAY  
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Terassa Dunnam	Animal Control
Mark Prince	Sports Complex
Sandra Munoz	Purchasing
Miguel Puente	Fire Department
Daniel Castillo	Code Enforcement
Johnny Womack	D&C
Clinton Meade	Fire Department
Abram Aguilar	D&C
Mark Collins	Fire Department
Rosemary Castillo	Aquatic Center
Alonso Carrasco	Fire Department
JoAnna Hernandez	Fire Department
Terrah Fryar	Animal Control
Joe Yanez	Water Office
Suzanne Allensworth	Water Office
Rogelio Rodriguez	Parks
Joshua Pardee	Fire Department

## Star Employees

*Lt. Lance Telchik*

*May 2012*

*Michael Calley & Andrew Garcia*

*June 2012*

*We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to each of you. We are proud to have you as members of the Big Spring Police Department. Each one of you has proven to be a valuable asset to the City of Big Spring and we congratulate you on a job well done.*

The Big Spring Police Association is having its annual shirt fundraiser. There are two shirts available (designs to the right). The shirts are \$15 each and are available in sizes Youth XS to Adult 6X. The design will be on the back of the shirt. Prepaid orders must be received by July 12<sup>th</sup>. To order, please contact Julie Van Dyken at the BSPD at 264-2657 or email at [jvandyken@bigspringpd.net](mailto:jvandyken@bigspringpd.net). By supporting the Big Spring Police Association, you are helping to support the many programs the BSPA sponsors including the annual Blue Santa program and the Shop with a Cop program that provides Christmas gifts for underprivileged youth in our community.



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