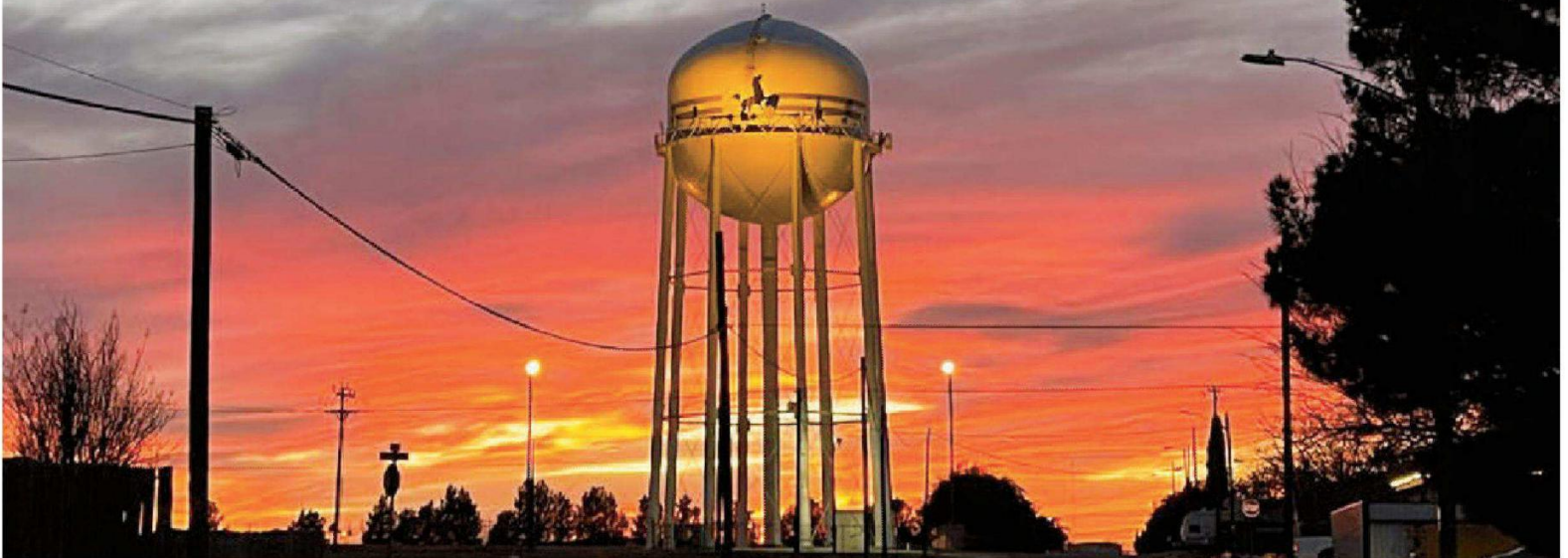


ANDREWS, TEXAS... THE CLEANEST CITY IN THE PERMIAN BASIN

By **Michael Rosales**, Community Outreach Coordinator, City of Andrews

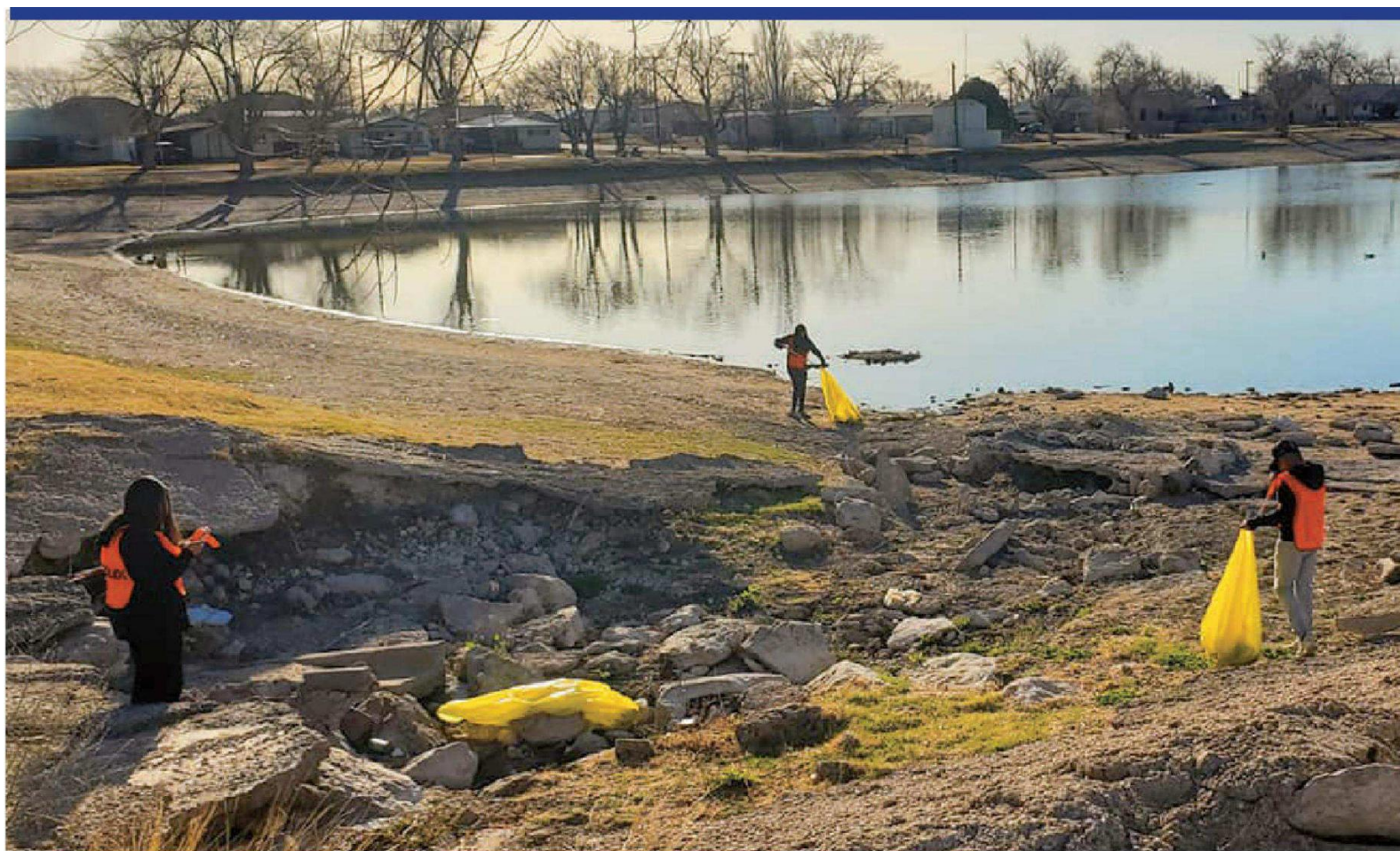


The City of Andrews was referred to as the "epicenter for economic growth in the Permian Basin" during a news story by CBS 7 that aired in June of 2019. A year later they aired a story entitled, "Small towns across Texas are shrinking. Andrews is growing." In fact, according to www.biggestuscities.com, "Andrews has grown 39.6 percent since 2000. Andrews, Texas is growing moderately quickly; it is growing faster than 75 percent of similarly sized cities since 2000." Andrews is definitely moving forward! But what really makes Andrews stand apart from the rest is the pristine, clean, and overall beauty that declares Andrews as the "cleanest city in the Permian Basin!"

Keep Andrews Beautiful (KAB) was created in the early 2000s when a group of friends grew tired of seeing all the trash that seemed to constantly cover Andrews. They were so moved to action that the result was the creation of KAB as a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. Soon after that, they became an affiliate of Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB). In the beginning, KAB was led by the Andrews Chamber of Commerce. Through the years, however, it would become a joint effort with the City of Andrews, where they would

assist with city-wide cleanup events. Each year a city-wide cleanup event was staged to rid the community of trash. This went on for more than a decade. Despite these efforts, and with no one to continually lead the charge and take KAB to the next level, KAB became dormant with almost no activity happening at all. But in 2018, this would all change.

"To be the cleanest city in the Permian Basin" became the vision of Keep Andrews Beautiful after the City of Andrews appointed one of their own as the new affiliate coordinator for KAB. This was done under the leadership of Steve Eggleston after he was appointed city manager of the City of Andrews on July 1, 2018. Eggleston describes himself as "a visionary servant leader experienced in building trust and unity among all stakeholders while addressing the needs of the community in a fiscally responsible manner." This is clearly seen with the direction the City has gone since then. Next, in November of 2019, the City of Andrews created a new position that aligned with the overall goals of the city council and city manager and introduced the City's first ever community outreach coordinator (COC).



One of the COC's primary responsibilities was to implement a new program aimed at engaging the community and promoting volunteerism: the Andrews Volunteer Initiative Program (VIP). The program was a success! In fact, during the 2022 Texas Municipal League (TML) Annual Conference and Exhibition in San Antonio, the City of Andrews was one of three finalists for a 2022 Municipal Excellence Award in city spirit for cities under 25,000 in population for their Volunteer Initiative Program (VIP).

The Andrews VIP is a myriad of programs created "to promote community pride by providing volunteers community service opportunities that better the quality of life in Andrews." The VIP's vision is "to create a better community through engaged volunteers." The programs offered include Keep Andrews Beautiful, P.A.W.S (Protecting Animals Welfare and Safety), Love Where You Live, and Andrews C.A.R.E.S. (Code Abatement by Residents Engaged in Service). P.A.W.S. was created to allow residents the opportunity to assist in promoting the humane treatment of animals through rescuing, sheltering, adoption, fostering, and education. Love Where You Live

revitalizes neighborhoods through property rehabilitation and clean-up projects by connecting neighbors to one another and volunteers. Andrews C.A.R.E.S. is exactly as the acronym reveals. In short, it brings homes with common property code violations into compliance by connecting volunteers to residents in need of assistance.

Although each of these programs is vital to the overall beauty and success of Andrews, it is apparent that the star of the Andrews VIP is Keep Andrews Beautiful (KAB). Our mission for KAB is "to empower residents to take responsibility for keeping Andrews beautiful by raising awareness regarding litter control and prevention and engaging them through beautification projects." Our vision is "to be the cleanest city in the Permian Basin." We will probably have to recast our vision because it looks like we just might be "the cleanest city in the Permian Basin!"

Keep Andrews Beautiful, as a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, was established through the Andrews Chamber of Commerce. Since then, it has been a joint collaboration with the City to be a source of litter control

and litter prevention in the community. Today, that partnership still stands and has been enhanced with the reestablishing of the board of directors. Our board of directors truly represents the community with members from each governing entity, business owners, and even some regular everyday residents. Because we knew that litter is a community problem, we wanted to provide a community solution and involve everyone in the community with the opportunity to be a part of the solution.

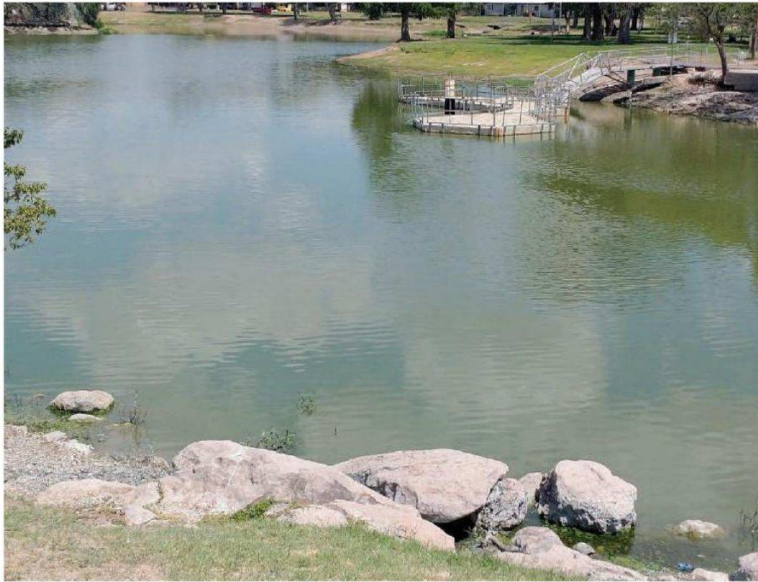
"Several years ago, we set out to become the cleanest city in the Permian Basin. Given the challenge of frequent west Texas winds, we knew we would need to attack this challenge from multiple fronts and to enlist the help of our community. In the past several years, we have partnered with our citizens, local businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and Andrews Middle School in very creative ways to educate, promote, and conduct activities to keep our community clean. As a result, I frequently hear compliments on our town's cleanliness from people passing through our community. By involving so many citizens and organizations, our beautification efforts have instilled a sense of community pride. I believe that when people visit our clean community, they will be enticed to relocate their families and businesses to our great community" (Steve Eggleston, Andrews city manager).

Through Keep Andrews Beautiful, the City of Andrews now offers two city-wide cleanup events known as the Spring and Fall Trash Bash. At each Trash Bash, we offer free KAB t-shirts, prizes, giveaway items, lunch, and a drawing to win gifts donated by local businesses. Right before the pandemic of 2020, we implemented the Loop 1910 Beautification Program. This program is very similar to TXDOT's Adopt a Highway Program, where residents adopt a portion of the loop to take care of it, keeping it free from litter. Our Green Exchange program was initiated by the city council designed to accomplish a few objectives for the community. This program rids the town of litter, helps our local nonprofit organizations, the community, and school groups reach their fundraising goals, all while promoting a clean-living environment to enhance the community's appeal to businesses and visitors. Our Adopt-a-Spot program allows residents to "adopt" areas where litter is a problem along streets, parks, and/or City rights-of-way. In 2022, KAB had a total of 598 volunteers who worked 2,185



hours, picking up an estimated 14,565 pounds of trash. The value of the work performed by our volunteers was \$65,455.72.

Each of the above programs are aimed at removing litter out of our community and into the landfill. Our Recycling Center accomplishes the same, but with the added benefit of taking collected materials to be recycled. We currently allow residents to drop off plastics (#1 & #2), cardboard, paper, and aluminum cans. Earlier this year, we partnered with the Andrews Middle School Community Problem Solvers (CmPS) to introduce the recycling of plastic bags,



specifically known as polyethylene films. The City was on the verge of implementing this new recycling effort when the Andrews Middle School CmPS coordinator contacted the City looking for a project for the students to take on. The City met with the students to discuss the possibilities and it was a match made in heaven. The students immediately made the necessary connections and set up meetings with stakeholders to form new partnerships to make this program a success.

The last option for residents is my personal favorite. We offer "Volunteer Events" to residents and groups who would like to stage their own event. The Boy Scouts completed several projects through the City's "Volunteer Events" option. The first is what we dubbed "The Main Street Makeover." They cleaned the sidewalks along Main Street

by sweeping, shoveling dirt, and removing all trash, debris, and weeds. The next Boy Scout event was the Recycling Center makeover. They freshened up all painted areas, replaced old signs, and took care of some minor repairs. This gave our Recycling Center a much-needed upgrade. Then, they painted parking stripes and added handicap parking to a small shopping center in our downtown district. The last project took place at our Post Office and consisted of replacing old signs and installing new signs.

Keep Andrews Beautiful and the City of Andrews continues to expand their influence and reach by periodically adding programs and events. This year, KAB held its first ever photography contest entitled "Capturing the Beauty of Andrews." Our two winners' photographs were made into postcards which the Chamber of Commerce distributes to visitors. We hope to make this an annual contest. Over a year ago, we began our Business Recognition Program which recognizes businesses that go above and beyond in keeping their property clean and beautiful. Not long after, we partnered with TerraCycle and launched a campaign to raise awareness of the number one littered item in the world: cigarette butts. Our "Nothing Butt Trash" campaign has collected about nine pounds of cigarette butts and cigarette waste since its inception. And last, our newest programs were implemented as partnerships with churches and businesses called Love Where You Worship and Love Where You Work. Similar to our Business Recognition Program, these organizations pledge to go above and beyond in keeping their locations clean, litter free, and beautiful.

Creating and maintaining a clean and beautiful city is achievable. Because we know it takes a community, we will continue to think outside the box and creatively offer opportunities for our residents to Keep Andrews Beautiful. There are many factors to consider, but the first step is to go outside and start picking up trash. The other aspect worth mentioning is that your city leaders must be in agreement and engaged in the actions required to ensure your city is clean and beautiful. Andrews, Texas is a special place...one visit here will confirm this. It truly is the people who make the place. We may not be the biggest city in the Permian Basin, but I am certain we are the cleanest city in the Permian Basin!

Andrews, Texas...the Cleanest City in the Permian Basin! ★