



CITY OF COLLEGE STATION
Home of Texas A&M University®

013

2014

2015

2016

YEAR IN REVIEW

OFFICE OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY... YOU DO HERE?



That's the question that plagues virtually every city's communications and marketing operation. City employees who are heavy users of our services have a deep understanding and appreciation for the full-service marketing, public relations and media relations work we do. But for those who don't interact with us on a regular basis, our operations remain somewhat of a mystery.

This 2014 Year In Review is intended to remove the mystery and provide insight into the work we performed for our city departments and City Council — all in an effort to benefit College Station citizens, visitors, students, businesses and other important stakeholders.

On behalf of my extremely talented staff, I thank you for the opportunity to work with yours.

- Jay Socol, Director

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT	3	SOCIAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA	27
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CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

20+

CITIZEN U
STUDENTS

200+

NEIGHBORHOOD
LEADERS

18

COMMUNITY
MEETINGS

Citizens University

More than 20 residents participated in the annual Citizens University, a free 11-week course organized and hosted by Public Communications that focuses on city departments, budgets, services and activities, along with the roles and responsibilities of city staff and elected officials. Participants asked questions, gave comments directly to department directors, staff and elected officials, and took part in hands-on activities to discover what it's like to work in each city department. Several Texas cities inquired about our CU program in 2014.

"(Citizens University) is a great program. It really expanded my understanding of what goes into operating and sustaining a good, thriving community. I learned that city employees are people, too."

2014 CU PARTICIPANT

Neighborhood Seminar Suppers

More than 200 neighborhood leaders and citizens attended our eight Neighborhood Seminar Suppers in 2014, which featured informative discussions with various city staff members on topics that impact College Station neighborhoods.

Community Meetings

Public Communications staff attended 18 homeowner association, neighborhood association and community meetings in 2014. We also participated in the Neighborhood Plan Implementation Team, which is responsible for implementing and reporting neighborhood-related items in the city's four completed neighborhood plans. This activity helped the city maintain its Neighborhoods USA certification.



A College Station family fishes at Stephen C. Beachy Central Park pond during one of the city's neighborhood fishing clinics. Photo by Mike Neu



CITIES FOR TOWN & GOWN RELATIONS *-Princeton Review*

Neighborhood Partnership Program

In 2014, 16 new homeowner and neighborhood associations joined the Neighborhood Partnership Program, which provides an educational forum about local and regional topics, and networking among neighborhood leaders. The program was created to help the city build positive collaborative partnerships regarding area development and city services.

Town and Gown Relations

Public Communications continues its relatively new objective of devoting equal resources to outreach efforts with college students in 2014. Our student outreach plan complements our neighborhood outreach plan, and is designed to accommodate our ever-changing population. Those who own or manage rental properties are included in these outreach efforts.

Public Communications staff regularly meets with Texas A&M Student Senate, Student Government Association, Aggie Up Committee, The Big Event and The Battalion. The city has a presence at key off-campus and new student events to share city information and be on-hand to answer questions. Strategic ads were placed in student and on-campus publications to give students the information they need to become fully integrated into the community. Staff also utilized the city's blog and the Inside College Station newsletter included in CSU bills to encourage students to establish and maintain good neighbor relations with permanent residents.

College Station was named among America's top-10 cities for Town and Gown Relations by the Princeton Review.



Marketing & Community Outreach Coordinator Lacey Lively keeps her eyes on real-time sentiment (via social media) toward College Station. Photo by Mike Neu

STAFFED FOR SUCCESS

4

STAFF
CHANGES

200

CITYNET BLOG
POSTS

1

STRATEGIC
PLAN

The Public Communications Office was reorganized in 2014 to assume additional responsibilities and take better advantage of our staff skills and talents:

- **Mike Neu became external relations manager** after several years as multimedia coordinator. Mike serves as the city's liaison with the CVB, works closely with the City Manager's Office on economic development issues, and is developing a website dedicated to promoting economic development.
- **Lacey Lively became Marketing & Community Outreach Coordinator** after serving as communications and marketing assistant. Lacey serves as the city's liaison with the student community while continuing her role in marketing city events and programs.
- After being part of Community Services, Neighborhood Services Coordinator **Barbara Moore returned to Public Communications** while maintaining the same responsibilities. The move is intended to integrate communication and engagement with community groups, especially neighborhoods.
- **Jon Carpenter replaced Mike as multimedia coordinator** after a decade as graphic design manager for the Texas A&M Athletics Department.

Internal Communications

Public Communications took on greater responsibilities for internal communications in 2014, including more than 200 blog posts crafted for city employees via CityNet. The department also assisted the CMO in preparing various messages to employees. No new employee surveys were conducted by the department but are expected to resume under the direction of the city manager in 2015.



Mayor Nancy Berry and Councilmember Julie Schultz pose with cyber-participating Councilmember James Benham during a council meeting break. Photo by Mike Neu

Strategic Communications

Public Communications began writing the city's first comprehensive strategic communications plan, which will see phase-one completed in 2015. The plan outlines the department's goals, objectives, tactics and measures while providing a framework for the city's overall public communications efforts. Sub-plans will cover the city's policies and procedures for media relations, internal communications, social media, marketing, hotel tax fund marketing, branding, crisis communications, student and neighborhood outreach, educational-governmental (EG) funding, and advertising/sponsorships.

City Council Services

Public Communications continued to provide support services to city council, including the development of a major presentation that the mayor presented to a planning meeting in Los Angeles about the possible re-development of the current city hall property. The department also helped write various speeches, facilitated council member blog posts, assembled PowerPoint presentations and developed discussion points for media interviews.



CAFÉ ECCELL
Grill and Fresh Seafood Bistro

POULTRY AND PASTA

ROCK SHRIMP Soba Noodles, Beet, Shiitake mushrooms • asian-dress, leek • Sesame crisp
MEDITERRANEAN SEAFOOD Linguine, Rock shrimp • scallops • mussels • saffron-infused linguine

fresh delivery 5 times weekly

CANTON SEA BASS
mint, large thick plates
Becky Drew

Café Eccell, a popular restaurant among residents and visitors, vacated its original location on Church Avenue in 2014. Photo by Mike Neu

ISSUE MANAGEMENT

100^k
COLLEGE STATION
POPULATION

1
TAX
INCREASE

Café Eccell

In early January 2014, owners of Café Eccell contacted local newsrooms, claiming the city was forcing the restaurant to vacate the building with virtually no notice. The restaurant, which had leased the former city hall for 20 years, was a College Station mainstay and public sentiment rapidly turned hostile toward the city council and staff for such insensitivity.

The narrative was false, but media outlets quickly launched coverage that had the organization on its heels — an issue compounded by the owners filing a lawsuit against the city.

Public Communications stepped in to advise City Manager Kelly Templin — barely 60 days on the job — on a response that was aggressive and somewhat rare considering the litigation. Templin's statement to the media on Jan. 12 clearly showed that restaurant ownership had been aware of the deadline for 11 months. The statement was a game-changer and produced a dramatic shift in public sentiment.

While the issue remained controversial for several more weeks, city officials were perceived by most as proceeding appropriately. The property was sold to Asset Plus Realty Corporation for nearly \$3 million, and the development is expected to have at least \$25 million in taxable valuation.

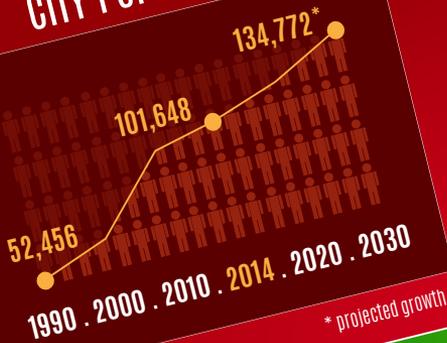
Tax increase and budget

In August, staff unveiled the city's proposed FY15 budget, which included a significant property tax rate increase of about 2.6 cents per \$100 of value. Bracing

City Budget FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015

A Proposed Tax Rate Increase WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

CITY POPULATION



Q Why do we need a tax increase?

The city is adjusting to the demands of College Station's growing population. A tax rate increase would provide funds needed for more police officers, firefighters, street repairs and code enforcement.

Q Couldn't you reduce costs instead?

In recent years, the city avoided tax increases by making significant budget and staff reductions. While these cost-saving efforts continue, today's strong growth requires additional revenue.

2.6¢ tax rate increase = \$1.6 MILLION in tax revenue each year

Q What does the increase pay for?

An increase of 2.6 cents would raise the operations and maintenance (O&M) portion of the tax rate to fund police, fire and transportation improvements.

O&M vs CAPITAL



OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE
This budget identifies recurring annual income (ex. tax revenue) and expenses (ex. employees).

CAPITAL

This budget identifies special projects (ex. new roads) funded over a longer period of time.



Public Communications developed a simple, easy-to-understand infographic to communicate the city's proposed tax rate increase. Design by Mike Neu

for a negative reaction from residents, Public Communications worked closely with Fiscal Services and the City Manager's Office to develop consistent messaging that underscored the legitimate need for the tax increase. Our aggressive public relations campaign included multiple blog posts, an eye-catching infographic, a Budget 101 session with local reporters, and a video on Channel 19 outlining the budget proposal. We also live-blogged from the three budget workshops.

This transparency, along with resounding council support, resulted in minimal public pushback and the proposal passed quietly and unanimously in late September.

100,000 inhabitants

In January 2014, College Station finally surpassed 100,000 in its monthly estimate of inhabitants, which we announced through the city blog on Feb. 17. The blog described how reaching the milestone would affect the city's extraterritorial jurisdiction and financial disclosure requirements for public officials. Public Communications also distributed a podcast on the subject with now-former City Planner Morgan Hester.

Football Game Day Issues

With the opening of the expanded Kyle Field and its 110,000 seats, the city faced tremendous challenges regarding game day traffic, parking and housing rentals. We worked with Public Works, Planning & Development and Police to craft several blog posts that addressed these issues in a clear and forthright manner and were among our most widely read blog posts of 2014. The Texas A&M Transportation Institute also extended our game day parking messaging through its new Destination Aggieland smartphone application.



A Texas State 7-on-7 participant runs across one of two recently installed synthetic fields at Veterans Park and Athletic Complex. Photo by Jon Carpenter

MARKETING SUCCESS

No. 2
SMALL CITY
RANKING

2.6K
MOSQUITO DUNKS
DELIVERED

3
TEXAS-SIZED
EVENTS

City Accolades

Public Communications aggressively promoted a number of accolades the city received from various outside publications and entities in 2014, including being named by Forbes as the No. 2 small city in the country for business and careers. To keep better track of the city's recent honors, we developed a special webpage that includes links to major accolades received since 2010. We also developed a separate webpage dedicated to prestigious honors earned by various departments and staff.

Mosquito Abatement Program

Several mosquitoes tested positive for West Nile Virus during a highly active mosquito season in 2014, which led to a wide-ranging and proactive public education effort. Neighborhood Services, now part of Public Communications, distributed 2,600 mosquito dunks – a record distribution – through the Mosquito Abatement Program, which grants funds to neighborhood and homeowners associations for the purchase of mosquito abatement products. The awareness campaign consisted of two blog posts, repeated emails to registered HOAs, multiple TV/radio interviews and pitched news stories, notifications for targeted mosquito spraying by the Public Works Department, frequent social media posts, a podcast, and a video on Channel 19.

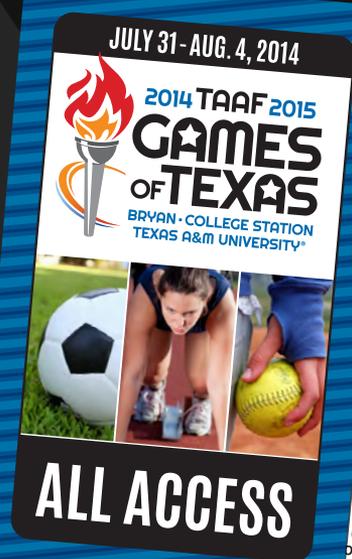
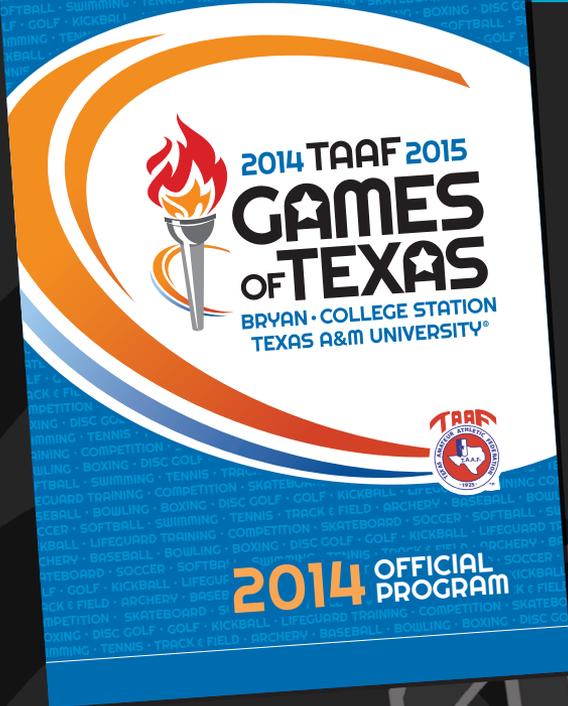
Athletic Tourism

Public Communications helped build and refine bid proposals for future events on behalf of Parks & Recreation and the BCS Convention and Visitors Bureau in 2014. As a result, College Station was awarded three events – 2015 TAAF Flag Football Championship, 2016 ASA/USA 16U National Championship and the 2018-19 TAAF Games of Texas – that are worth millions of dollars in economic impact.

WELCOME ATHLETES



BRYAN • COLLEGE STATION • TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY®



THURSDAY, JULY 31
HILTON COLLEGE STATION
TX A&M UNIV. GOLF COURSE
BRYAN AQUATIC CENTER
COLLEGE STATION HIGH SCH

FRIDAY, AUG. 1
HILTON COLLEGE STATION
TX A&M UNIV. GOLF COURSE
REMONIES, BLUE BELL PARK ***
VETERANS PARK & ATHL CMLPX
BRYAN AQUATIC CENTER
COLLEGE STATION HIGH SCH

TURSDAY, AUG. 2
TAMU EDUC. ACT. BLDG (PEAP)
BRIAN BACHMANN ATHL CMLPX
GRAND STATION ENTERTAINMENT
HILTON COLLEGE STATION
RESEARCH PARK
STEPHEN C. BEACHY CNTRL PK
G. HYSMITH SKATE PARK
VETERANS PARK & ATHL CMLPX
BRYAN REGIONAL ATHL CMLPX
BRYAN AQUATIC CENTER
MITCHELL TENNIS CENTER
COLLEGE STATION HIGH SCH

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 3
BRIAN BACHMANN ATHL CMLPX
HILTON COLLEGE STATION
STEPHEN C. BEACHY CNTRL PK
BRYAN REGIONAL ATHL CMLPX
BRYAN AQUATIC CENTER
MITCHELL TENNIS CENTER
COLLEGE STATION HIGH SCH

THURSDAY, AUG. 4
ADAMSON LAGOON
VISITAGGIELAND.COM

Public Communications designed dozens of Games of Texas marketing and collateral materials in 2014. Among the variety of requested products were ads, videos, posters, billboards, banners (top), programs (left) and badges (right). Design by Mike Neu



Above are more examples of the materials created for Games of Texas in 2014. Branded promotional items (*top*), photo backdrops (*left*) and medal ribbons (*right*) were made available to participants at each event facility. Photos by Mike Neu



Young athletes slug it out during a TAAF Games of Texas boxing event held at the Hilton Hotel and Conference Center in College Station. Photo by Mike Neu

Games of Texas

In 2014, College Station hosted the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation's Summer Games of Texas, an Olympic-like festival that featured 8,438 athletes from across the state competing in archery, lifeguarding, boxing, golf, skateboarding, soccer, disc golf, swimming, tennis, and track and field.

Only 220 participants were from College Station, which means the rest – along with about 20,000 of their coaches, family members and friends – were visitors who dropped an estimated \$6 million into the local economy from July 31-Aug. 4. The good news ... most of them will be back for another round of games in 2015.

Public Communications created the local Games of Texas brand, designed dozens of signs, banners and other promotional materials, and developed a comprehensive marketing plan in collaboration with the city's Parks and Recreation Department.

Economic Development

The city took a number of steps in 2014 to reestablish its commitment to economic development. As resources were moved to accommodate new initiatives, Public Communications was asked to work closely with the City Manager's Office to facilitate new business development and attract new industries to College Station.

In support, Public Communications activated an economic development microsite to consolidate online information, developed several fact sheets and print advertising materials to solicit new business, and appeared before several internal and community committees on behalf of the city.



A family poses for a photo during the city's Trick-or-Treat at Werewolf Creek event held at the Wolf Pen Creek Park festival grounds in October. Photo by Mike Neu

Brazos Valley Senior Games

Public Communications assisted Parks and Recreation in promoting registrations for the 2014 Brazos Valley Senior Games held in February. Participation more than doubled, with 401 athletes between the ages of 49 and 88 who competed in track and field, swimming, basketball, cycling, golf, volleyball, tennis, a road race, pickleball, disc golf, horseshoes and washers. Among the competitors were 348 out-of-town visitors — including one from South Dakota — and 133 women. The most popular sport? Pickleball, with 112 entries.

Trick or Treat at Werewolf Creek

New to 2014 was Trick-or-Treat at Werewolf Creek on Halloween. Public Communications created all of the marketing materials, placed and designed all of the advertising and created the onsite signage. Through these efforts with Parks and Recreation, the event brought in 5,000+ to Wolf Pen Creek Park to enjoy family-friendly activities.

Employee Recruiting

In 2014, Public Communications helped multiple departments recruit qualified individuals for open positions. Efforts included creating videos, designing print advertisements, crafting handouts, establishing webpages, utilizing the city's social media accounts, and coordinating radio and television interviews.

MEDIA SURVEY RESULTS *(See page 34 for complete results)*



MOST-COVERED CATEGORIES

CS-referred news articles 3,403

Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2014

	Police	1,602	47%
	City Council	443	13%
	Parks	340	10%
	Economic Development	272	8%
	General Topics	204	6%
	Fire	136	4%
Total			88%

MEDIA TONE



Positive	1,191	35%
Neutral	2,007	59%
Negative	205	6%

MEDIA RELATIONS

5
YEARS OF
BUDGET 101

100
% TRUSTWORTHY
PER MEDIA

94
% STORIES
+ or NEUTRAL

Led by Public Communications, the city continued to have positive relationships with local media outlets, which advanced the city's overall reputation and image with the public. Data shows that the city's credibility has greatly improved in the last five years.

Biggest Stories of 2014

National

- 12-foot python takes over Texas woman's bathroom
- Texas A&M football players arrested
- Bryan-College Station to be first Texas "GigaSpeed" Community
- Cement truck rollover captured by a minivan dashcam
- CS driver blames turtle, cat, squirrel, tree in wreck
- McDonald's ordered to pay \$27M in deaths of teens

Local

- CS Police Honored for Actions During Shooting
- Cafe Eccell
- CS reaches 100,000 inhabitants
- E-cigarettes
- Rental Registration, Neighborhood Integrity
- Texas 7-on-7 State Tournament

Budget 101

For the fifth consecutive year, Public Communications and Fiscal Services teamed to provide a Budget 101 session for local media to foster a deeper understanding of the city's budget issues and processes prior to the series of budget workshops. The result was appreciative newsrooms and more accurate stories.



Councilmember James Benham discusses Suddenlink's announcement of ultra-high-speed Internet in Bryan-College Station by summer 2015. Photo by Jon Carpenter

Suddenlink broadband announcement

On Sept. 22, it was announced at a Texas A&M press conference that College Station and Bryan residents would have access to ultra-high-speed Internet from Suddenlink by mid-2015, making ours the first Suddenlink market in Texas – and among the first nationally – with community-wide “GigaSpeed” connectivity.

The intent was for the news to be covered beyond local borders, but the timing of the announcement and the limitations of our event partners required Public Communications to develop and execute an eleventh-hour story pitch to media markets across the country. The following was achieved:

2,600+ Newsrooms reached

1,200+ Engaged recipients

250+ Total online pickups

90,000+ Headline impressions

EMBRACE grant funding

In July, the city council agreed to repay \$180,000 to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that was misused by a local nonprofit organization called EMBRACE, which had also violated three other federal requirements related to HUD funding. The city then sought repayment from EMBRACE for breach of contract.

Misinformation distributed by EMBRACE’s attorney about the city’s handling of the matter inflamed online forums. Public Communications worked diligently behind the scenes with The Eagle to ensure the accuracy of the newspaper’s investigative story. As a result, the story was accurate and did not improperly impugn the city’s reputation, and the negative attention quickly dissipated.

SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH in 2014



↑ 1,667
FACEBOOK
likes



↑ 2,961
TWITTER
followers



↑ 583
LINKEDIN
followers



↑ 57.6k
BLOG
views



↑ 85k
SLIDESHARE
views



↑ 10k
YOUTUBE
views



Top 2014 Council Presentations viewed on Slideshare

2,653 views	Kyle Field Game Day Transportation Plan
1,439 views	Door-to-Door Solicitor Regulations
1,401 views	The Great Escape at Central Park
1,133 views	Common Game Day Parking Violations
1,063 views	Lick Creek Nature Center

**M O S T
V I E W E D
P A G E S O N
C S T X . G O V**

342,258 views	Home Page
130,990 views	Utility Customer Service
96,228 views	College Station Utilities
64,266 views	Employment
58,239 views	Police

SOCIAL & DIGITAL MEDIA

120
NEW BLOG
POSTS

2.4
MILLION
WEBSITE VIEWS

85^K
SLIDESHARE
VIEWS

LinkedIn

This Public Communications endeavor saw a 57 percent increase in followers of the city's page on LinkedIn, a business-oriented social network that has become a key tool in employee recruitment. Of our 1,026 followers, 24 percent are current employees, 36 percent work in government and 38 percent are entry-level professionals.

Slideshare

The world's largest community for sharing professional content has become Public Communications' secret weapon for outreach. Slideshare allows us to easily upload and share presentations, infographics, and documents to provide more in-depth information to the public. In 2014, we shared 121 PowerPoint presentations that attracted almost 85,000 views. In addition, local media frequently embedded these presentations in their news stories. Embeds on WTAW's website alone produced more than 2,700 views. Since we began using Slideshare in May 2012, we've posted 348 city presentations that have resulted in more than 178,000 views. Prior to our use of Slideshare, only those citizens attending city council meetings or watching the video feeds would've seen these presentations. We now have greater transparency.

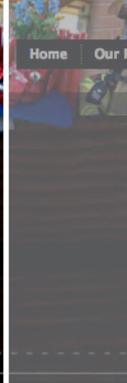
Facebook promoted posts

Public Communications utilized paid Facebook promoted posts for the first time in 2014. These posts allow Facebook page owners to target audiences by age range, location and interests. During the marketing campaign for the city's first Trick-or-Treat at Werewolf Creek event, Public Communications reached 88,960 Facebook users with promoted posts.



CITY OF COLLEGE STATION
Home of Texas A&M University

From your City Government

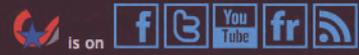


LATEST

A closer look at CS's oil and gas ordinance update

By Alan Gibbs, City Engineer

The oil and gas boom has made the United States the world's largest producer, thanks



TOP BLOG POSTS of 2014

- 3,418 views** [The bonfire memorial you may have missed](#)
- 2,917 views [Your account number is key when reporting an outage](#)
- 1,232 views [5 handy tips to help students thrive in College Station](#)
- 1,143 views [Spike in drug-related overdoses leads to advisory](#)
- 1,065 views [10 game day parking violations you can easily avoid](#)

Councilmember blog posts

- 783 views** [Mooney: Benefits of Blinn campus outweigh concerns](#)
- 619 views [Nichols: Managing the impact of neighborhood rental properties](#)
- 460 views [Brick: Why I support adding e-cigarettes to tobacco ordinance](#)

Top blog posts of all time

- 6,505 views** [Is your drinking water dangerous?](#)
- 5,145 views [Treasure found in a drainage ditch](#)
- 3,418 views [The bonfire memorial you may have missed](#)

Blogging success

The city blog continues to be an effective cornerstone of our content marketing and public outreach strategy. The blog showed significant growth in 2014 with a 52 percent increase in average daily views, and the 120 new blog posts attracted more than 57,000 views. In addition, the blog ranks high on search engine queries, which produced almost 11,000 views. Since we began blogging in August 2010, we've generated nearly 500 posts, resulting in about 170,000 views and 5,500 shares.

Our live city council meeting posts and previews continue to be popular with local media outlets, which resulted in far more accurate and consistent news coverage in 2014. We also live-blogged the election blog from the Brazos Center in November. They have effectively set the narrative on the city's most important issues, rather than allowing someone else to do that for us.

City website

An analysis of cstx.gov shows that website traffic is increasingly driven from mobile devices. While our overall page views remained about the same in 2014 at 2.4 million, access by mobile devices such as iPhones increased by 26 percent. Mobile now accounts for about 36 percent of our web traffic, while desktop access is about 57 percent. To put that in perspective, desktop computers accounted for about 94 percent of our website traffic in 2010.

CityNet

Public Communications assumed a prominent role in creating content for the city's internal website in 2014. A total of 245 blog items were posted, an average of almost one post every working day. News headlines and story links relevant to our employees are updated almost daily.



Kellie @Kellie_Lynn2013 · Jan 16

OH MY GOSH. @CityofCS this is absolutely HILARIOUS.. #CALLEDOUT

youtube.com/watch?v=p8eKWs...

Collapse

Reply Retweet Favorited More

YouTube



Taking it to the Tweets 01.13.14

Sharing tweets on traffic, traffic, and more traffic.

[View on web](#)

RETWEETS 22 FAVORITES 21



In the above screenshot from the city's @CityofCS Twitter feed, a College Station resident responds to a Takin' It to the Tweets video. Video by Mark Beal

VIDEO PRODUCTION

100+
CITY VIDEOS
PRODUCED

BCS Lemonade Day

We recruited several local school kids to participate in a short, entertaining video promoting Lemonade Day in Bryan-College Station. The video helped make the event a huge success as hundreds of local kids set up lemonade stands across the community as their first experience in entrepreneurship.

Fire Department Recruiting

Public Communications worked with CSFD to produce a three-minute video that expressed the camaraderie and pride in the department and encouraged those interested in a career in the fire service to become a part of the team. The video, to date, has an impressive 1,100 views on YouTube.

Takin' it to the Tweets

This recurring series of short videos tackles tweets expressing genuine frustrations about the city in a fun, self-deprecating way and encourages interaction. The two editions posted in 2014 were about traffic congestion and drinking water, and each received about 1,400 YouTube views. The reaction, mostly from college students (the intended audience), was exceptional. They caught the humor, responded positively and shared it.

Emergency Communication

Hall of Fame broadcaster Dave South, the Voice of the Aggies, narrated a 4-minute video written and produced by Public Communications describing the many ways for citizens to get vital information before, during and after large-scale emergencies such as tornadoes. The video is not time-sensitive and should be useful for several years.



Batting practice at Central Park (*left*); Benoit Lutgen, mayor of Bastogne, Belgium, visits Veterans Park (*top*); Councilmembers Julie Schultz, Karl Mooney and Blanche Brick are sworn in for their second term (*bottom*). Photos by Mike Neu



Token in memory of late City Manager Frank Simpson (*top*); Danielle Singh talks with citizens at the Comprehensive Plan 5-Year Checkup at CSMS (*bottom*); CSU Electric lineman on the job (*right*). Photos by Mike Neu and Jon Carpenter



A close-up of the Vietnam War Memorial, dedicated May 2014 (*left*); A Habitat for Humanity volunteer helps build a house on Phoenix Street (*top*); Bowling event medal winners from the Brazos Valley Senior Games (*bottom*). Photos by Mike Neu

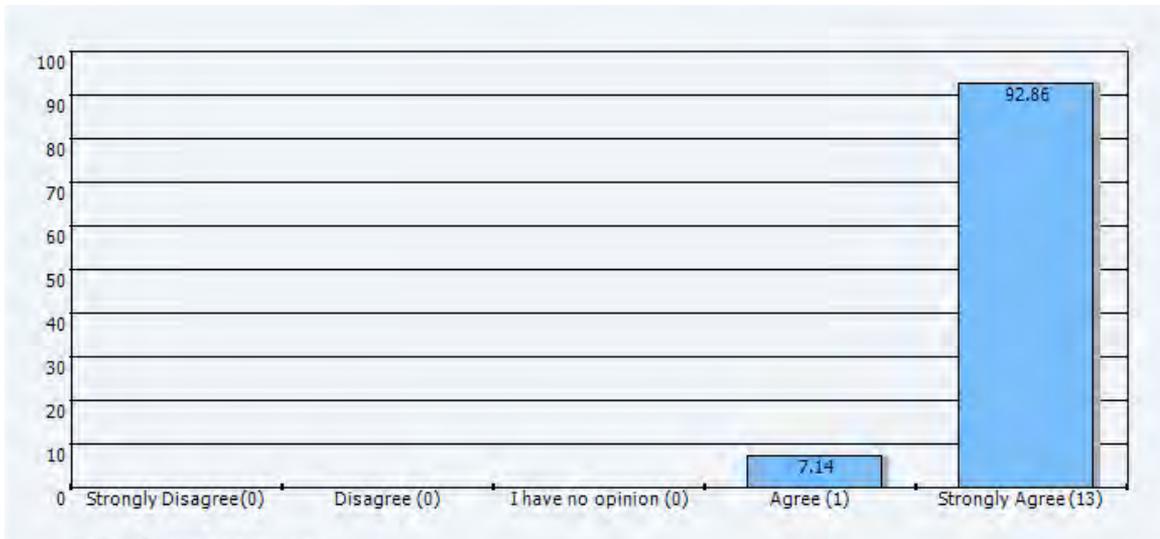


Kyle Field before its final demolition in 2014 (*top*); Dogs race during Wienerfest at Wolf Pen Creek (*left*); Sgt. Travis Laco receives the Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery from U.S. Senator Ted Cruz (*right*). Photos by Mike Neu and Jon Carpenter

MEDIA SURVEY RESULTS

1

Those responsible for handling media relations within College Station's Office of Public Communications are helpful to my news gathering and reporting.



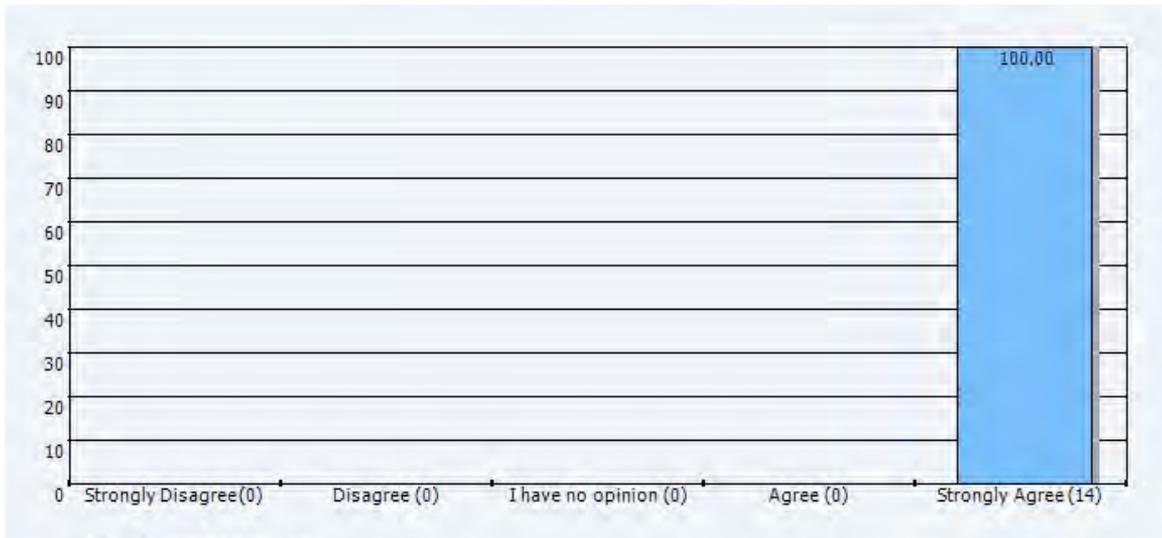
"I wish all City of College Station officers operated at the same level."

"Jay and Colin are extremely helpful on deadline and off. They understand the media has a job to do whether they agree with the story or not...."

"Jay Socol and his crew are really great at responding...CS does it right."

2

Those responsible for handling media relations within College Station's Office of Public Communications meet my expectations for accessibility.



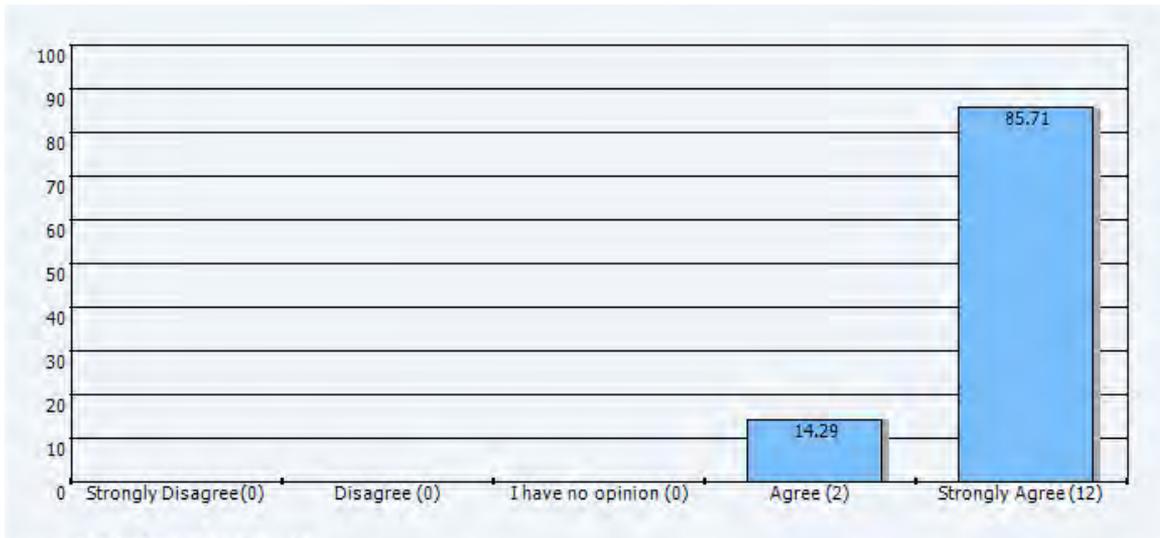
"Always available via phone, text and email."

"Nights, weekends, text messaging - truly great job. I'd imagine your wives are amazing for being so chill with you being almost constantly on call."

"I've never not been able to get hold of Jay when I need him."

3

Those responsible for handling media relations within College Station's Office of Public Communications respond to me in a timely fashion.

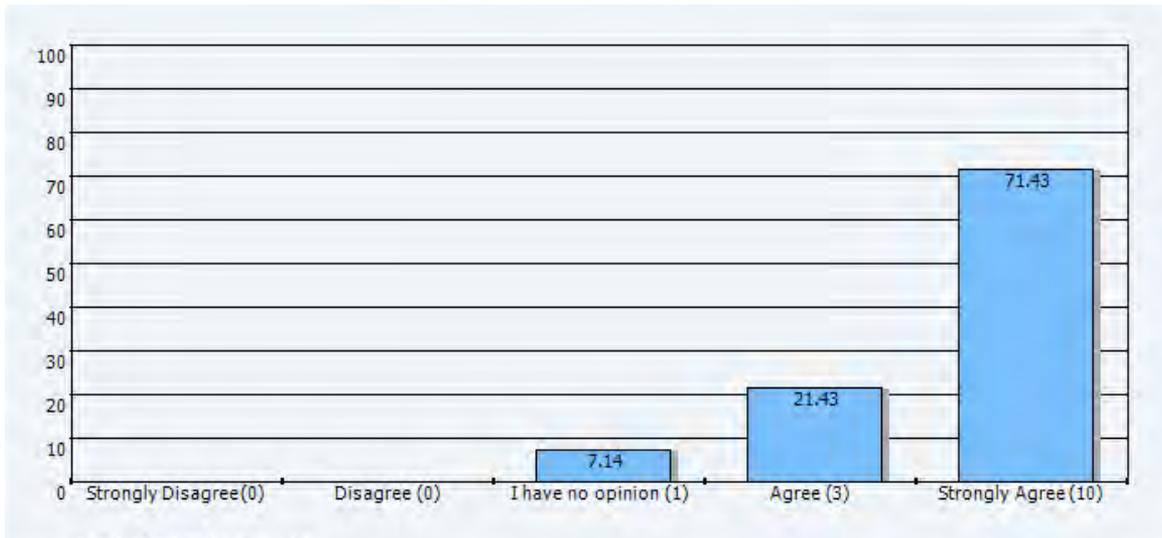


"They always respond to calls and emails pronto!"

"Jay and Colin are BOTH wonderful in this area. Also, if they don't know the answer, they know the person who knows the answer, which is just as great!"

4

Those responsible for handling media relations within College Station's Office of Public Communications are trustworthy.

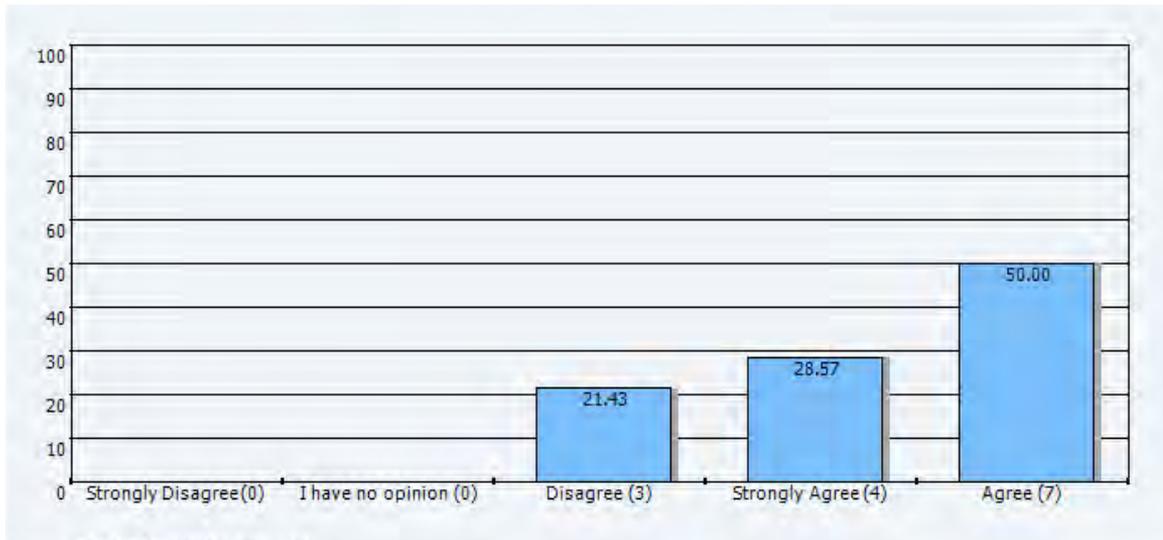


"While I don't distrust the public communications officials, I don't look to place trust in them either. I have to stay objective and think critically about how it's the public relations department's ultimate objective to make the city look good..."

"...and if you're not I'm gonna report on it."

5

News sources, whether city council or city staff, meet my expectations for accessibility.

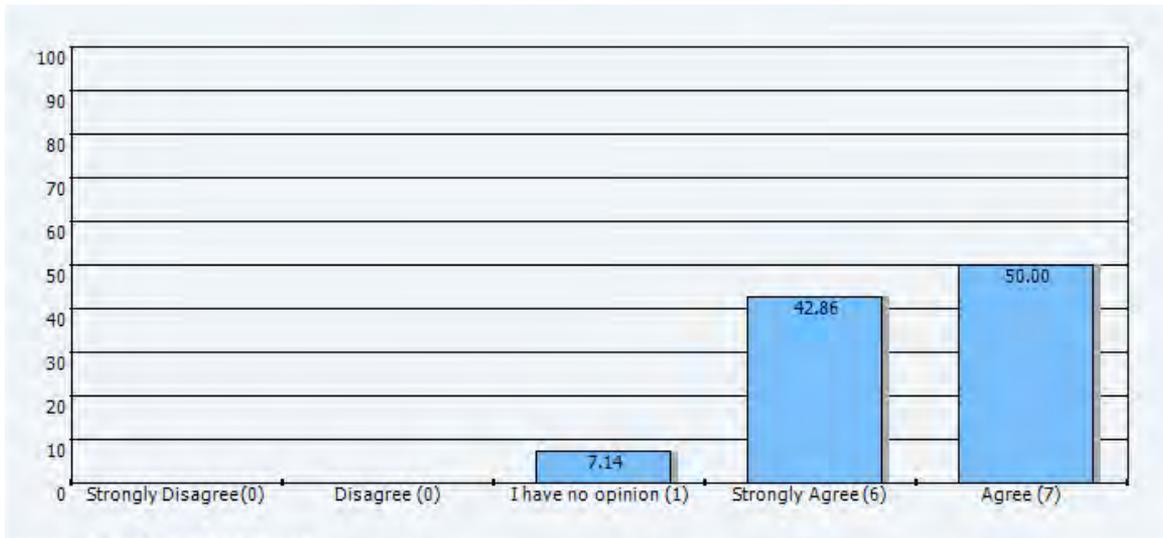


“Nearly all city employees are very accessible and are reliable about calling back and providing information...”

“Some city council/staff do not want to talk about negative issues. That is frustrating for journalists trying to tell a balanced story. Guess what, the angry constituent will talk 99/100 times. It looks bad when the city will not.”

6

News sources, whether city council or city staff, are pleasant to deal with.

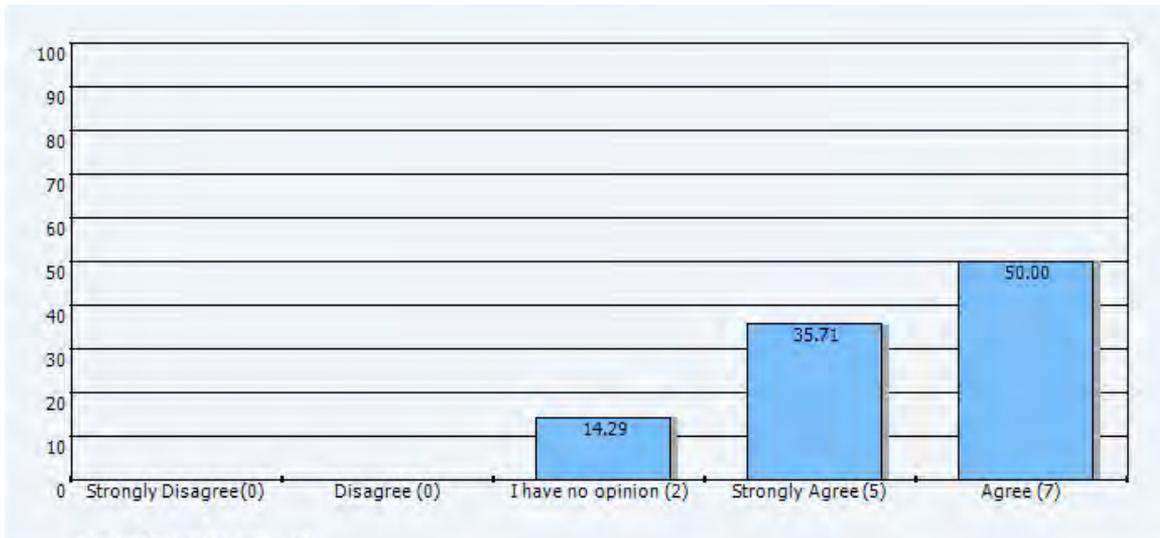


“Not all conversations have to be pleasant, depending on what is being discussed, but they are professional...”

“City employees have dropped whatever they’re doing to help our newsroom out. We appreciate the fact they have a difficult job, but still find time to answer our endless questions.”

7

News sources, whether city council or city staff, are trustworthy.



"...The city council is a political entity, and I would not be doing my job if I trusted them. While I trust city officials to comply with laws...I think it is only healthy in my position to keep a healthy distance and distrust..."

...once again, if this proves not to be the case, that's totally fine for me because it's probably a story. But for the record, I have had no issues."

8

In what areas does College Station's Office of Public Communications excel in helping you gather and report news?

"Accessibility and a very good understanding of my deadlines. Those two things go hand in hand to helping me get the people I need on the phone, to email back, to start looking into things, etc."

"Timeliness, accessibility and an understanding of news."

"The live blog of council meetings and the Things To Watch for are both immensely helpful. It can be tough to make heads or tails of a Council Agenda."

*"Secures accurate information in a timely fashion. * Available at all hours, even if it's to say they can't comment or direct us elsewhere. * Tracks sources who are the most qualified to answer questions. * Understands the job of the media..."*

"Quick reaction and help on City Council stories."

"Website blogs, particularly city council recaps."

"Availability. Getting me any and all information related to a subject I am covering. Taking the time to explain things, and re-explain them..."

9

In what areas does College Station's Office of Public Communications need the most improvement?

"Nearly all my interactions are with Jay, so I am not sure if the other members of the office can be of more help. If there are good, feel-good stories out there, send them The Eagle's way."

"I have 50 blue USB drives and I haven't a clue which one is which."

"Helping all city department's understand it is better to talk to the media - and for TV outlets to do so on camera - than to ignore the issue or make yourself unavailable."

"More suggestions on story ideas..."

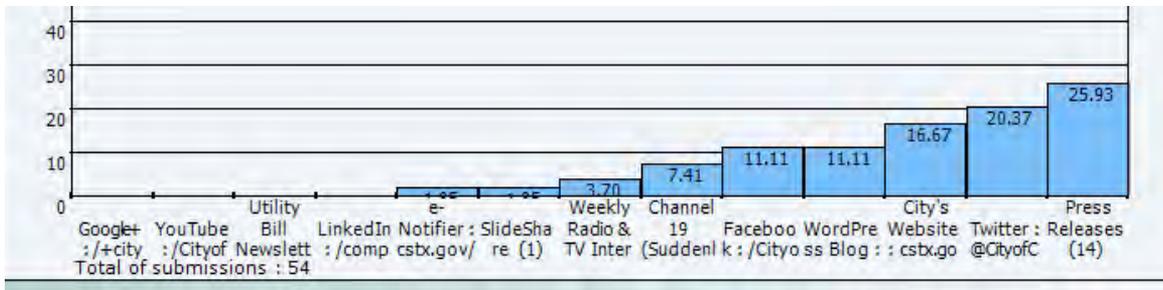
"The process of finding someone to interview could always be quicker, but CS does a good job at scheduling."

"Maybe, if they had access to everyone's schedule they would be able to provide a better ballpark estimate of when people are available."

"Arranging interviews with city council. I know its difficult to work around their schedules, but there needs to be some streamlined system for making the process smoother."

10

College Station’s Office of Public Communications utilizes a wide variety of methods to proactively alert media. Which methods do you utilize most, and which alternative methods would you like us to consider adopting?



“Text alerts.”

“Emails work best. It’d be nice to sign up for text messaging alerts for the important stuff since much gets lost on Twitter and Facebook thanks to overcrowding. Social media has a lot of mundane information, so it’s not a must-read.”

“None at this time.”

“I don’t know how much useful information you could communicate through Snapchat. But it would make my day.”

“8-track tapes.”



Public Communications staff: Lacey Lively, Barbara Moore, Jay Socol (*top*), Mike Neu (*middle left*), Colin Killian, Jon Carpenter, Mark Beal (*bottom*).

Jay Socol

Director of Public Communications (5th year)

Specializes in media relations and developing strategic messaging for city council, City Manager's Office and city departments.

Colin Killian

Public Communications Manager (5th year)

Expertise in media relations, internal communications, writing, editing and developing traditional and non-traditional communication solutions.

Mike Neu

External Relations Manager (7th year)

Helps internal and external stakeholders strategically use and track HOT funds. Provides marketing and design expertise to economic development efforts.

Lacey Lively

Marketing & Community Outreach Manager (4th year)

Develops, executes and manages targeted marketing plans for city departments, including a separate outreach plan for college students. Leads the city's social media presence and coordinates the annual multi-week Citizens University class.

Barbara Moore

Neighborhood Services Coordinator (7th year)

Problem-solver. The city's trusted, primary liaison to 80+ registered homeowner and neighborhood associations. Focuses on keeping residents informed of issues affecting them.

Mark Beal

Broadcast Media Specialist (8th year)

Specializes in shooting/editing video, animation, after-effects and photography. Need a good video? Mark will create a great one.

Jon Carpenter

Multimedia Coordinator (1st year)

Specializes in graphic design, photography and managing integration of the city brand in marketing and media forms.

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