

AUSTIN

Lake Kyle grand opening represents 10 years of work by staff, volunteers

By **Jordan Gass-Pooré** | 6:00 AM Feb. 27, 2012
CST



Photo by Annie Drabicky

Lake Kyle will officially open to the public with a grand opening ceremony March 10.

When residents and officials gather for the grand opening of Lake Kyle on March 10, they will be celebrating the culmination of a decade's worth of work.

Parks and Recreation Director Kerry Urbanowicz is among those who have been working on the park "since before there was a Parks Department," he said.

The park encompasses more than 100 acres and includes the 19 surface acres for the lake, a wildlife preserve, playscape, primitive camping spots, a terraced amphitheater area, and tournament-caliber horseshoe and washer pits.

"We've done all of this in 10 years without a single General Fund dollar. Not one

General Fund dollar," Urbanowicz said. "That's why it took 10 years."

The park's development was paid for with a grant from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and funds from the 2007 Hays County Parks and Open Space Bond.

"We won an Envision Central Texas [award], a stewardship award for the plan and concept a few years ago. With that we were able to secure two grants totaling about \$1.2 million," he said.

During the past decade of work, the Parks Department also was able to get land donations from developers as each new subdivision that abutted the park was built.

"Whenever any subdivision came in, I'd say, 'Great, you have to give me access to the lake. You have to give me access to the creek,'" Urbanowicz said.

What residents will see when they visit the park, just off Lehman Road, represents Phase 1 of the plan for the land. When Phase 1 is complete, it will also include picnic tables, fishing piers and nearly 10 miles of hike and bike trails.

To secure the TPWD grant, the city had to set aside some of the land as a managed nature preserve.

"The whole point is to preserve it for generations as we see it. We want to keep it exactly the way it looks," Urbanowicz said.

Twenty acres have been designated for the preserve. A path will run through the area, but the space will be mowed only every five years or so.

"If that's where all the critters are, you want to stay to the trail," Urbanowicz said.

The park has seen visits from beavers, coyotes, skunks, possums, the occasional rattlesnake, feral hogs, rabbits, mice and a few nutria.

Urbanowicz said that in the spring, the entire field next to the lake is covered in wildflowers. The department plans to seed the area with bluebonnets later in 2012.

Stricter rules

In addition to its work to preserve wildlife, the city secured grant money by ensuring that water quality be maintained in the lake. To that end, stricter rules apply to Lake Kyle than to the other parks in the city's system.

"We're going to preserve the quality of the water by [preventing] the pollutants," Urbanowicz said. "There's no smoking, because that puts pollution down there; no alcohol, that tends to bring pollution; and no pets, because that brings pollution."

The department has moved its headquarters and its four full-time staff members to the Lake Kyle office.

The new office includes a rainwater catchment system, and staff will use the water to irrigate landscaping around the building.

Another tighter rule mandates that the park will be open to the public only when staff are present.

Urbanowicz said volunteers are welcome to help add more hours of operation. The park is currently open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday–Friday.

"What we're trying to do is, April to May and September and October to be open six days a week. And then between Memorial Day and Labor Day, be open seven days a week," he said.

Volunteers must be at least 18 years old and must pass a criminal background check.

Flood cleanup

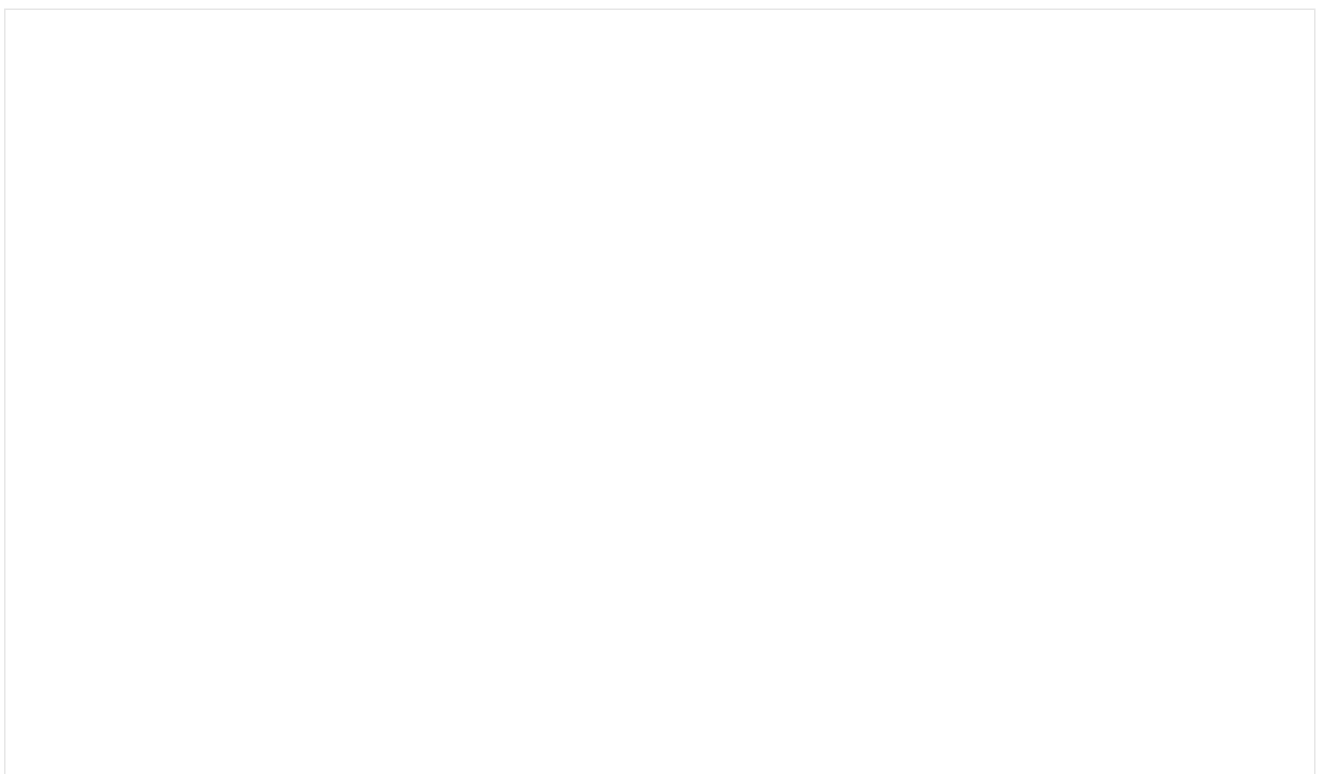
On Jan. 25, the park experienced what Urbanowicz described as a 50-year flood, with most of the land and part of Lehman Road under several feet of water.

To prepare for the upcoming grand opening, on Feb. 25, nearly 200 volunteers gathered to help city staff clean up the park.

Urbanowicz said the group collected more than 3,000 pounds of trash, debris and junk in less than two hours.

After the grand opening, the next scheduled event at the park is a fishing tournament March 31 to raise funds for the city's youth fishing program. On April 21, the Earth Day project will be held to plant landscaping around Lake Kyle.

For more information or to volunteer, go to the parks department [website](#) or call 262-3939.



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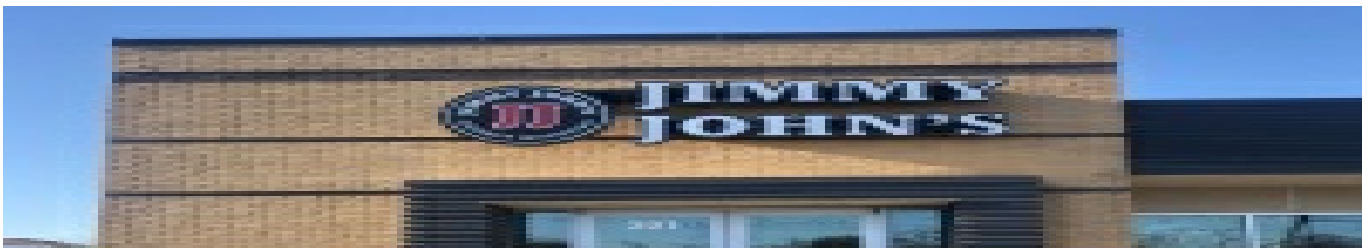
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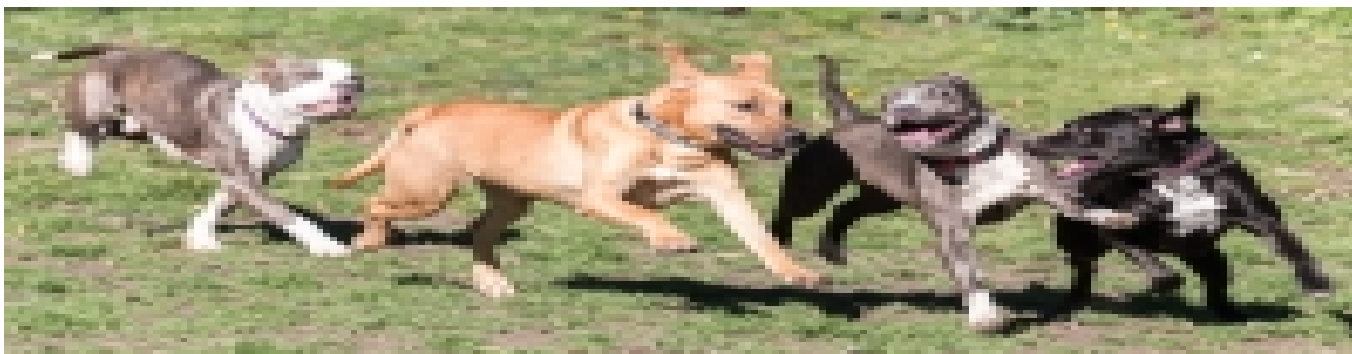
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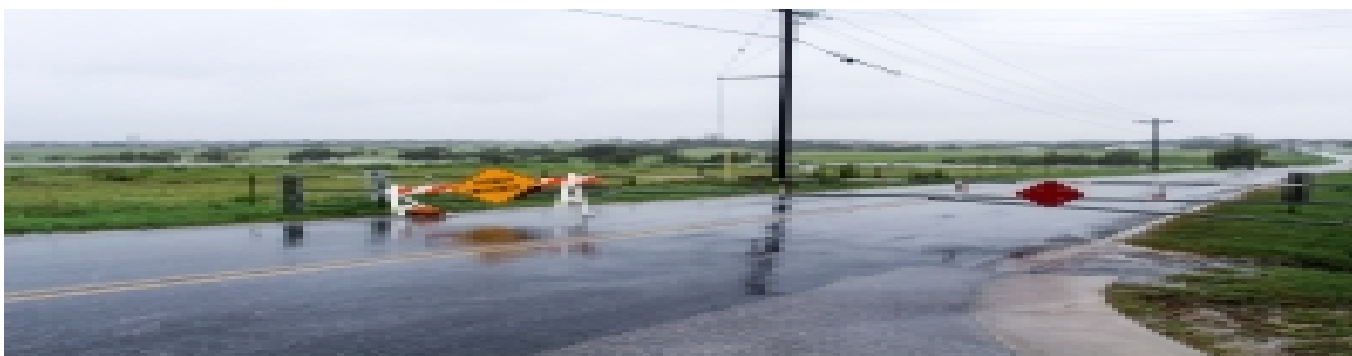
2 San Marcos Jimmy John's locations now closed

Both establishments have posted signs of closure thanking customers and employees for their support.



Boozy Bark to celebrate one-year anniversary in San Marcos

The dog day care offers indoor and outdoor play and a BYOB off-leash dog park.



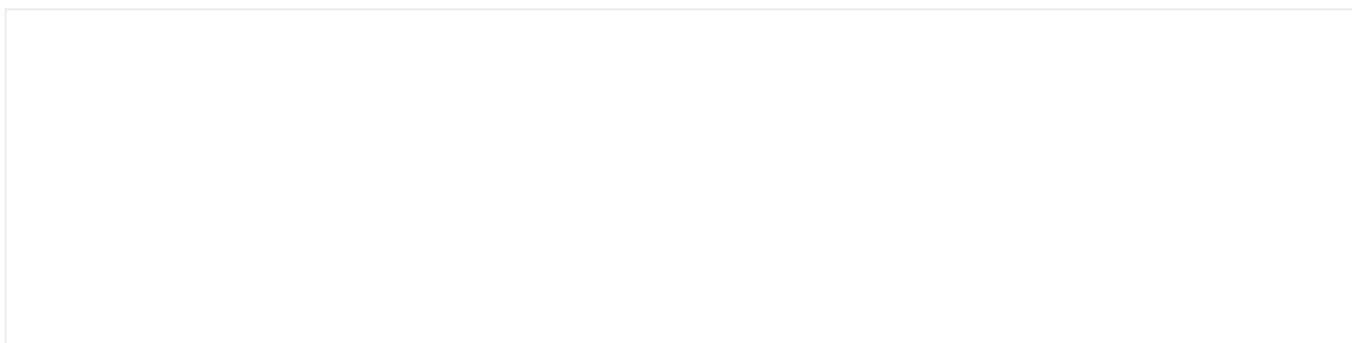
San Marcos City Council weighs allocation of \$24 million in disaster mitigation funding

The city received the grant to aid primarily in preventing flood damage.



Pink Velvet Training opens in Buda

Trainer Jessica Garcia offers a group-style workout for women in Buda.





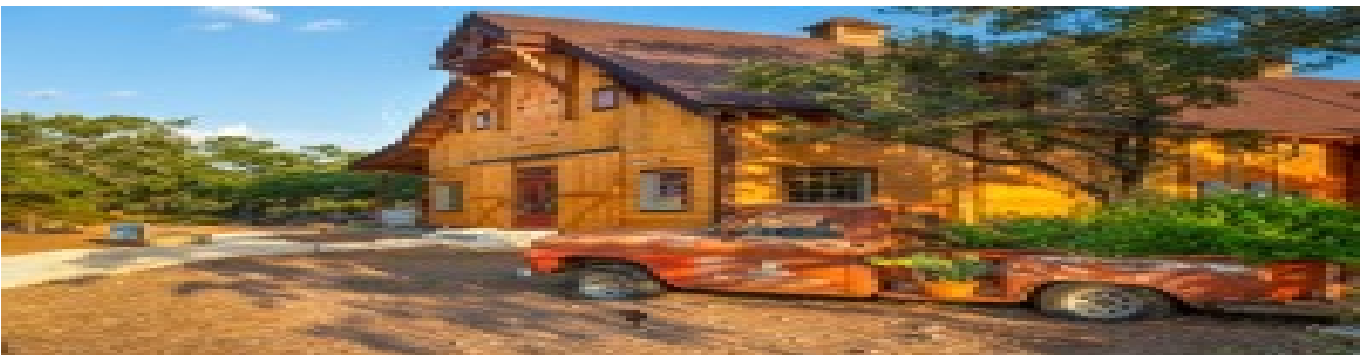
Hawaii Poke now open at The Lyndon in San Marcos

The poke bar offers 18 toppings.



Buda plans to address transportation and mobility challenges with new master plan

The city will offer a chance for more public participation in early 2020.



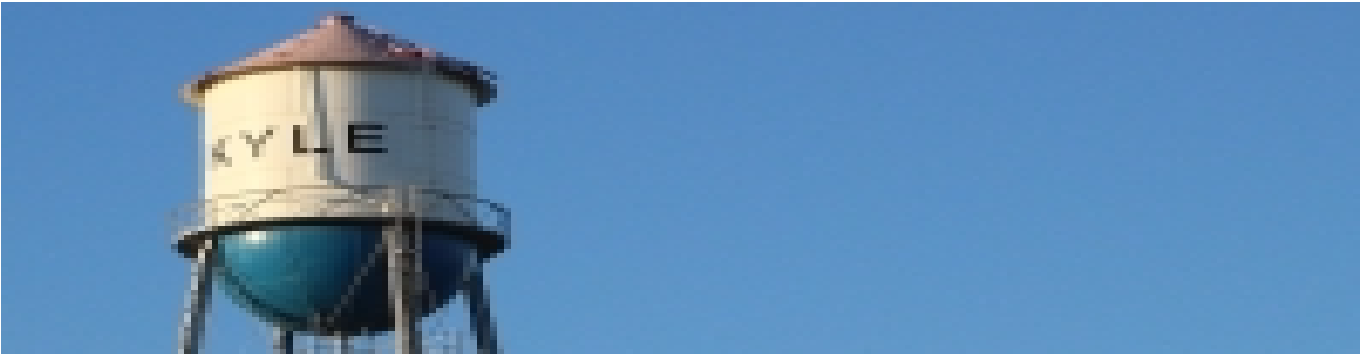
Roughhouse Brewing to celebrate first anniversary in San Marcos with Jan. 18 event

The family-operated brewery features beer, food, an outdoor stage and a playscape for children.



Vue Dental celebrates one year in Kyle

Vue Dental, a practice run by Dr. Keshavi Patel, celebrated its first anniversary Dec. 8 at 22510 I-35, Ste. ...



Q&A: Get to know Michael Tobias and Brandy Heindl, candidates for Kyle's Jan. 25 special City Council election

The election was called after Council Member Daphne Tenorio resigned.



Over the Moon Popcorn to hold January opening in San Marcos

The shop will offer more than 50 flavors.





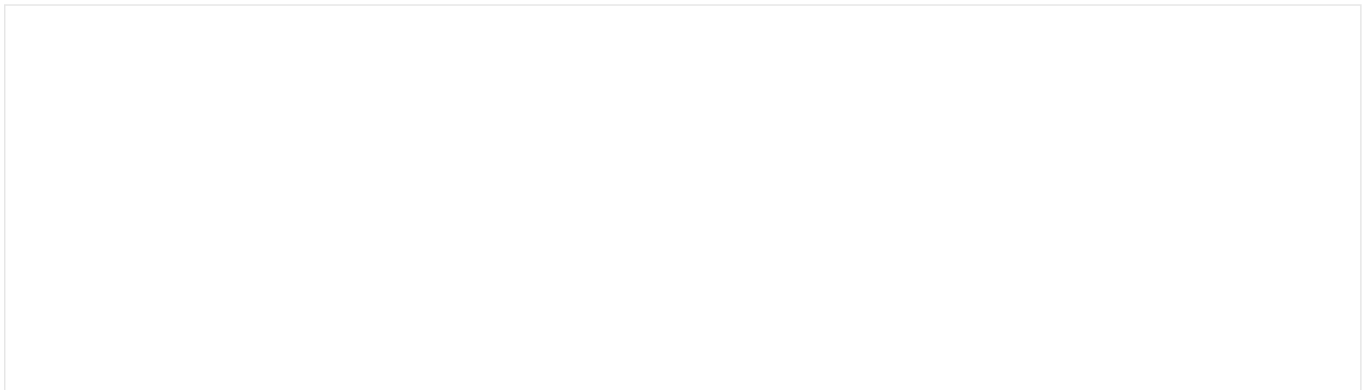
2019 YEAR IN REVIEW: 11 business profiles from San Marcos, Buda and Kyle

Read all the 2019 business features from Community Impact Newspaper.



2019 YEAR IN REVIEW: 11 restaurant profiles from San Marcos, Buda and Kyle

Here are some great places to grab a meal in San Marcos, Buda and Kyle.



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