

- Eleven (11) groups used the Hughes Center during January for a total of 235 hours. Events included a law enforcement appreciation event to honor all of the law enforcement officers in the area, the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration presented by the Progressive Men's Club and the Pink Rose Arts and Civics Club, the River Valley Gun Club Christmas in January party and the Knights of Columbus local free throw contest.
- The Parks Commission did not meet in January. The next schedule meeting is February 9 at noon at the Hughes Center.
- The AARP began training for the upcoming tax season. They offer tax assistance from February 1 until April 13. February operating hours are Monday through Thursday from 8:00am to 4:00pm. Last year the volunteer group assisted more than 1700 citizens with their tax returns. This is a wonderful program and a big thank you to all the volunteers for their time.
- Quarterly safety inspections were conducted by the department. All fire extinguishers, emergency lights and exit lights were working properly. An unannounced fire drill was held in January and no problems were encountered. We continually strive to make sure we provide as safe a work and recreation environment as possible.
- We are currently working with two boy scouts on eagle projects. The first project is planting trees along Orbit Lane trail at Shiloh Park. The other project is an unimproved trail at Illinois Bayou Park near the water's edge from the boat launch to the trail at the clearing by the power lines. Both projects will enhance the park areas and save the City money.
- A pruning program was started at all city parks. The maintenance department will prune low limbs and remove dead trees and brush in an effort to improve security, ease maintenance and beautify park areas. The project should take about a month to complete.
- After the rainfall in January and the ensuing flood waters, we had several days of trail and park cleanup ranging from limbs and trash to mud removal from trails. The Ouita Coal Company Mountain Bike Trail shorelines are being cleaned by the River Valley Mountain Bike Club. They picked up 22 trash bags of litter along the shoreline at Illinois Bayou Park and Dike View Park.
- Maintenance staff removed and stored all of the downtown Christmas lights. They are now stored in a safer location that will make it easier to load and unload next year.
- The exit signs in the gymnasium were upgraded to include LED emergency lights that light every exit doorway for added safety. We are currently evaluating our park system lighting in order to develop a plan to upgrade and update lighting in all parks. Our goal is to achieve the optimum lighting at all facilities that is the most efficient to operate.
- The Department began preparation to continue in 2016 the turf management plan for our athletic fields.