



COUNCIL MONTHLY REPORT

DEPARTMENT: ADMINISTRATION
SOCIAL MEDIA/COMMUNICATIONS

MONTH: April 2016

SOCIAL MEDIA

The City currently has two social media accounts: Facebook and Twitter. The CVB has separate Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. In keeping with the larger population's use of social media, the City's Facebook account is the most active.

Engagement is increasing as people get used to visiting our social media accounts as reliable sources of information. Feedback from users and two-way conversations on timely issues is becoming the norm. High engagement is particularly evident when there are alerts, such as severe weather or power outages. Police news in general has high engagement.

Social media activity is being tracked based on the list below. A recent Events category has been added to track notices and live posts about City events.

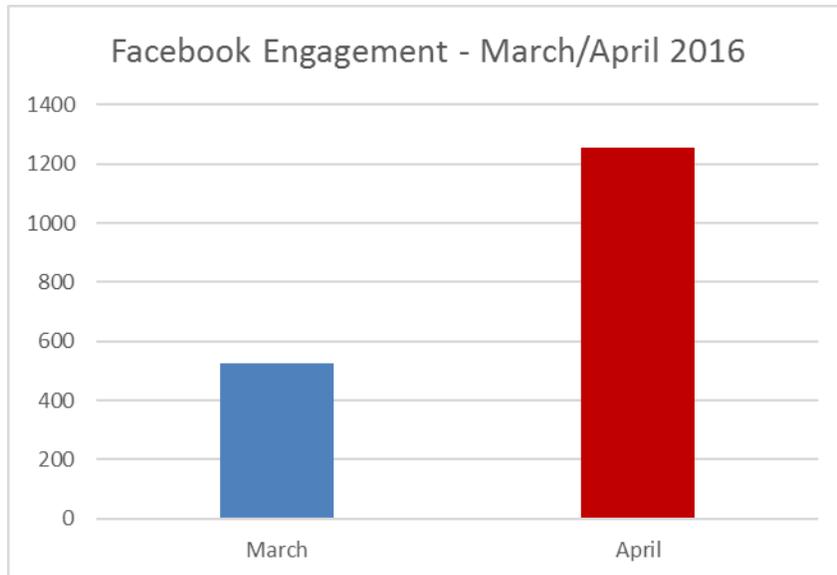
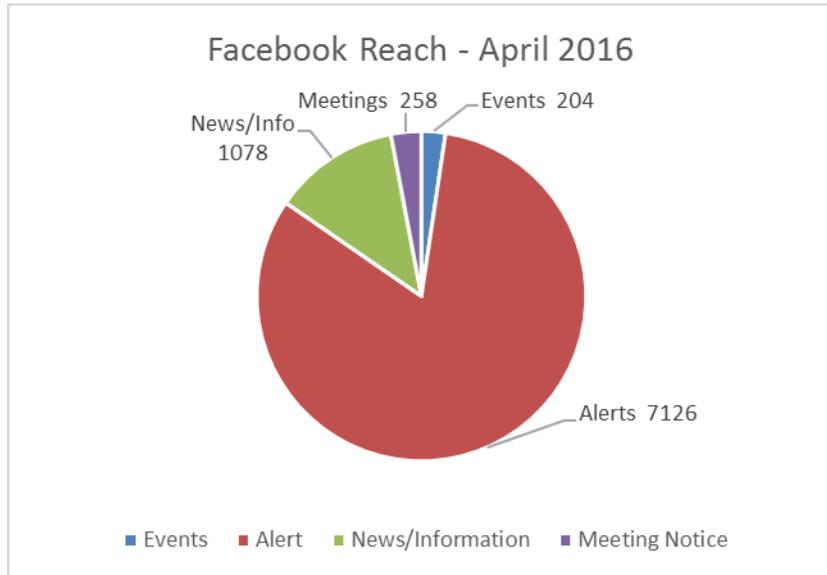
Type	Description
Events	City special events (Safe Streets, etc.)
City Services	General city information related to services (pool closed, etc.)
Alert	Police information; time and subject sensitive
News/Information	Feature news; lighter (yard of the month, employee awards, city news)
Meeting Notice	Council, P&Z, Civic Club meetings

FACEBOOK

Followers (Fans): 617

The City's Facebook page is a "fan page" which has followers instead of friends. The forum has more social tone and is not dominated by hard news. Our Facebook account gains followers every month as a result of exposure and increasing engagement.

In April, the main driver of Facebook reach was alerts from the Police Department related to severe weather, flooding, and road closures. We began posting notices about incoming severe weather at 6:00am on April 18. Updates were continuous throughout the day and provided information about road closures, school closures, high water areas, and other alerts. A secondary driver of Facebook activity during April was election related news, such as early voting that was moved to city hall after the community center became an emergency shelter.



- News Features – Facebook constantly makes adjustments to the newsfeed and other functionality to improve performance and target information. A recent change focused on prioritizing content topics in the news feed based on time a user spends on similar content. This is referred to “time spent viewing” and can be enhanced with captivating images, videos, articles, links and other means that hold attention and keep people coming back. The key to getting and keeping eyes on our page is to create content that keeps people engaged.
- Demographics: Fans specifically in Shenandoah have increased significantly and now outnumber those in The Woodlands and in Houston, and are equal to the number in Conroe. This increase is another indication that residents/businesses within the City are following our social media accounts as a reliable and relevant source of news and information. Our followers are 68% female and 30% male, and 81% of the activity is on mobile devices. The busiest time on our Facebook page is between 5:00pm and 6:00pm.
- Goals: Capitalize on increased following and engagement by continuing to be a source for relevant information; produce creative content; continue to increase engagement with useful information, quality images, and links.

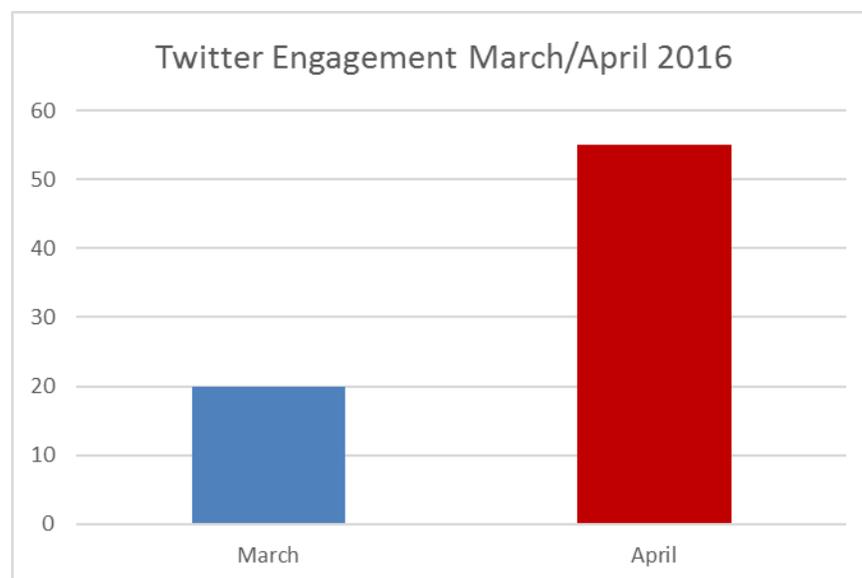
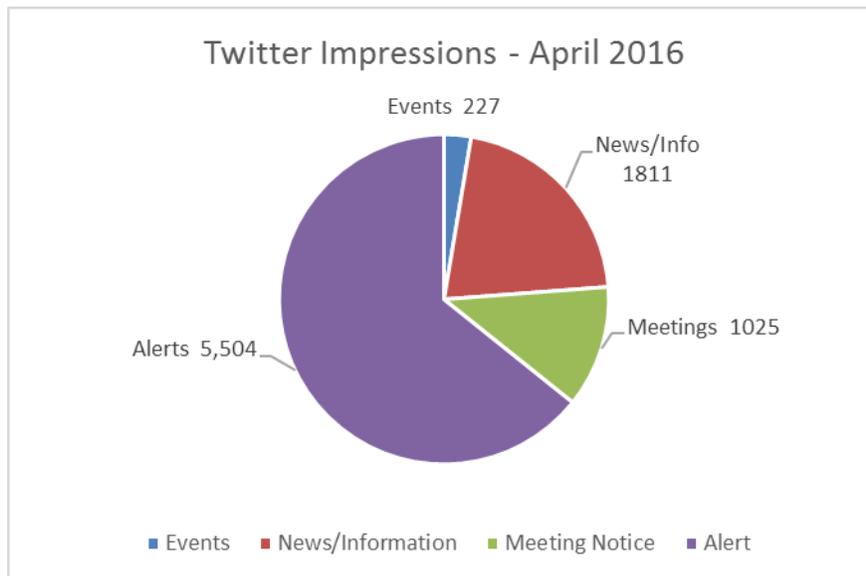
TWITTER

Followers: 864

Following: 150

Twitter is the second most popular social media platform. It is most widely used in emergency communications and social activism, and has a broader business application than Facebook. It is also a growing news source for many users. An estimated 23% of internet users have Twitter accounts. Similar to Facebook and other social media networks, the higher the education and income, the greater the use of Twitter.

In April, alerts about severe weather, flooding and road closures also dominated the activity, followed by news about new business openings. Engagement surged during April as a result of continuous weather related notices and we had a number of retweets of our information.



The Twitter account gains followers each month, albeit at a more gradual rate than the Facebook account. Engagement is increasing month to month as we post more frequently and include photos, hashtags, and links.

- **New feature:** Twitter announced that it will soon stop counting photos and links as part of their 140 character limit, which would free up about 23 to 24 characters. The 140 character limit was originally put in place to allow content to fit in a single SMS message (160 characters). While technology has changed since the early days of Twitter, the limit remains to encourage creativity and brevity, and continue the unique feeling associated with this platform.
- **Demographics:** Our Twitter audience has mostly business interests, with politics and current events being second. Consumer spending habits are in line with the typical patterns of a middle class/affluent community, with a focus on premium brands, healthy lifestyle, and travel. Our audience generally has an annual household income of \$150,000 to \$250,000+. Of our current followers, 62% are female and 38% are male.
- **Goals:** Increase our reach on Twitter by following more accounts, increasing engaging content, and including media whenever possible.

SOCIAL MEDIA SUMMARY

During the severe weather and flooding in April, we were one of the first agencies that began pushing out critical information, and the public soon began sending information back to us that helped the Police Department take appropriate action. The dialogue that evolved is key to the power of social media; people want to get information and give feedback. This event was a success story in the effective use of our social media accounts.

We should consider developing a YouTube channel in the future to provide educational videos about city operations, processes, and other helpful information to reach a broader group of people on a regular basis than what might occur with onsite classes or town hall meetings. Videos could also supplement onsite meetings or classes by giving users a quick reference tool and providing updates to information people received previously.

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

Web Site:

The City's web site is regularly updated with pertinent information that is beneficial to users. Recent examples include election news. The number of people that visited our web site as a resource for election details increased significantly, especially after early voting was moved to city hall.

Newsletter:

The City's newsletter has expanded slightly and will shift to two issues per year in addition to the annual report. The most recent issue included a more detailed overview of our budget process, debt, financial transparency, capital projects and tax revenue.

SUBMITTED BY:

