



The City of West, Texas Plans 4/17/14 Event to Observe One Year Memorial of Fertilizer Plant Explosion

April 8, 2014

Media Contact: [Benet Ayers](#), West 4/17 Forever Forward Committee Chair (254) 366-1499

West, Texas (April 8, 2014)— The 4/17 Forever Forward Committee would like to announce the details of the upcoming observance of the one-year anniversary of the West explosion. The event, intended as a healing milestone for the extended West community and those most directly affected by the April 17 disaster, will be held at the CW Pavilion at the West Fair and Rodeo Grounds. It is expected to last about one hour. The actual ceremonies will begin promptly at 7:30 p.m., but a choir will begin setting the mood with a live performance of selected songs around 7:15. The first portion of the program will primarily reflect on the losses suffered in the event, and will include prayers, songs and words of comfort. At 7:51, there will be a minute of silence, marking the time the explosion actually occurred. The portion of the program after the time of silence will include a State of the City Address by Mayor Tommy Muska, a specially created video about rebuilding and recovery in West, messages of hope and encouragement by Dr. John Crowder of West First Baptist Church and by Judge Ken Starr, President and Chancellor of Baylor University. Prayers, including an invocation and benediction, will be offered by members of the West Area Ministerial Alliance, to include Father Ed Karasek of West's St. Mary's Church of the Assumption, Rev. Jimmy Sansom of First Methodist Church of West, and the president of the Alliance, Rev. Terry McElrath of Tokio Baptist Church. Music will be provided by the Baylor Singing Seniors and by the band Revere.

Seating will be limited, with a large section being reserved for those most directly affected by the disaster, including those who lost loved ones responding to the emergency, West's first responders and their families, and those who lost their homes to the explosion. However, the venue is large and arrangements are being made to accommodate overflow. The event organizers are deeply appreciative of the help that has been so generously offered to West and will welcome those from the extended West community as well as those from the family of first responders. Mayor Tommy Muska said "We couldn't have come this far without all the help from our friends and neighbors, and we'd especially like to invite all the first responders and others who were here helping us in those tough early days to join together with us for this one-year anniversary. This one-year anniversary will be important for healing, and we'd like to share that with those who stood beside us."

Thanks to the generous assistance of KWTX Channel 10 of Waco, the event will be available via live streaming at [KWTX.com](#) for those who are unable to attend in person.

For more information, please visit www.cityofwest.com, or call Benet Ayers, West 4/17 Forever Forward Committee Chair.

ABOUT BAYLOR SINGING SENIORS AND DIRECTOR, PHILLIP SITTON:

The Baylor Singing Seniors is an area wide senior adult choir founded in 1983 by Dr. Euell Porter, then Head of Choral Activities at Baylor University. It was Dr. Porter's dream to provide an opportunity for senior adults to have a venue to enjoy singing and performing wonderful music throughout their active lifetimes. The choir, under the sponsorship of the Baylor School of Music, has been rehearsing and performing on a regular basis since then, and today has an enrollment of over 100 members from Waco, Lorena, Woodway, McGregor, China Spring, Hillsboro, Robinson, Valley Mills, Crawford, Axtell, Morgan, Moody, Hewitt, and Mart.

Rev. Phillip Sitton now serves as the choir's fourth director. A native Texan with close ties to Dr. Porter and Baylor, Phillip returned to Waco after retiring from over 40 years of ministry in San Antonio. Now well into his second year as conductor of the choir, Rev. Sitton brings a lifetime of musical training and professional experience to help lead these dedicated seniors to share music whenever and wherever possible. His dedication to continue the dream and work of Dr. Porter has now become his own life's passion.

ABOUT REVERE:

Revere is a contemporary Christian worship band from Central Texas. The group was founded in the summer of 2011. The group has since led worship all across northern and central Texas. Among their recent performances was an appearance at the Rise Up Youth Rally held at Latham Springs on March 22. Their main goal as a group is to see lives changed by the grace and love of God through their music.

ABOUT WEST 4/17 FOREVER FORWARD COMMITTEE

The West 4/17 Forever Forward Committee, appointed by City of West Mayor Tommy Muska was designated to plan the City's official event, commemorating the April 17, 2013 fertilizer plant explosion. The committee's mission is to plan a reverent and positive community event for the citizens of the City of West, marking the first anniversary of the April 17, 2103 disaster, honoring the heroes who fought to protect the town, recognizing the losses sustained by the community, and encouraging growing optimism within West residents.

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