

December, 2007



City Lights DeSoto, Texas

A publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department



Council Corner - A Message from Sandy Respass



As a newly elected Council member I quickly found myself assigned to serve as

Council liaison to the DeSoto Public Library. Prior to this assignment my only contact with the Library had been to go there once or twice a year to participate in early voting, and like most folks, I had little real knowledge of or appreciation for the many benefits and services the Library provides DeSoto citizens. However, now that I've gotten to know the Library, its staff and services better, I would like to take this opportunity to share some of the many benefits available to you as a DeSoto resident simply by dropping by the Library and signing up for a library card.

The library provides the following services for all card holders:

- Fiction and non-fiction books for loan including recent best sellers
- New movie releases. DVDs and videos, for loan
- e-Books, both as tapes and downloadable files
- Computers for word processing and internet access
- Wireless internet access
- Quiet space for reading and study
- Research and educational databases including:
 - Learn-a-test
 - TexShare Databases
 - College Source
 - Dallas Morning News
 - Schaumburg African-American Studies Database
 - Reference USA
 - Medline Plus
 - Remote access to databases and other resources through the Library web site (www.ci.desoto.tx.us/library)
 - Children's programs and

resources including:

- Children's books
- Accelerated readers
- Story time for children Summer reading programs

Things are also changing at the Library. Around the first of the year the Library will be adding a coffee shop to make for a more Barnes and Noble like environment. The Teen Area will be renovated and improved to make it a more inviting place for our youth. An after hours computer room will be added to will provide computer and internet access for those unable to access the library during normal hours of operation.

Access to the Library will also be changing with the start of construction of the Town Center Redevelopment Project in early December. During construction, the entrance to the Library will move to the new City Hall east parking lot via the Recreation Center entrance. Getting to the Library will require a little longer walk, but assistance with carrying books will be available if needed.

And if you are returning materials using the drive by book drop, there will be a shiny new book depository located on the north side (creek side) of the Library which can be accessed from either Hampton Road (new entrance) or from the east City Hall parking lot.

So there you have it. The DeSoto Public Library offers more benefits and services than you probably imagined, and the Library staff is constantly striving to add new features and improve service. If you do not already have a Library card for yourself and your family members please drop by and check out the Library. Sign up for a card and start enjoying the many benefits of membership. It's all free, and a Library card is one of the best gifts you could give yourself and your family members this holiday season.

Sandy Respass Place Five

Town Center Development Groundbreaking - Tuesday, December 11, 2007 10 a.m.



The vision is becoming a reality! The City of DeSoto has partnered with Trammell Crow's High Street Residential Division to construct an up-scale mixed-use development at DeSoto Town Center. With more than 35,000 sq. ft. of retail and office space, 135 one and two bedroom residential units and a 360 space parking garage, this development is the first of its kind in the southern Dallas County. It embraces the new urbanism trend combining retail, office and residential units with DeSoto's existing municipal complex. Site work and utility relocation will begin December 3, 2007 and the project is scheduled for completion in April 2009. For a construction schedule and updates on the project, check out the city's website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us.

Answers to Your Questions Regarding How Your Sewer Charges Are Determined

How are winter sewer averages calculated for residential customers?

Each year, residential customers have their monthly water consumption during the winter months averaged to establish a maximum sewer charge. We take the water consumption shown on your December, January, February and March billings, discard the highest month and average the remaining three months to establish the maximum sewer charge that will be used from April of that year through the following March. For example: 10,000 gallons in December, 15,000 gallons in January, 8,000 gallons in February and 6,000 gallons in March, the new average is 8,000 gallons. The January bill of 15,000 gallons would be discarded because it is the highest of the 4 months and the remaining December, February and March billings would be averaged.

Why do you average only 3 of the 4 winter months?

Lawn sprinkling, entertaining guests during the holidays, filling a swimming pool or having a toilet leak, for example, can all increase a monthly bill. Being able to discard the largest of these bills prior to averaging the 3 remaining months gives a more accurate measure of water going into the sewer system.

Once I have my average, does this mean I will be charged this same amount every month?

This is a maximum charge. You will not be charged more, but you could be charged less. If your average is 8,000 gallons and you only use 5,000 gallons one month, you will be billed for 5,000 gallons of sewer.

Why do you use the winter months for averaging?

Normally residential customers are not watering their lawns during this time period and all of the water usage is inside the house. Generally this is the time of the year that the majority of the water is going down the sewer system. If you operate your irrigation system year round, it would be advisable to have a separate meter for watering your lawn so that the water used on your lawn would not calculate into the winter average.

What is my average if I am a new customer and do not have a winter months' history?

All new residential customers receive a 7,000 gallons average until they have established their history during the winter months. Remember that is the maximum and the charge is less if your consumption is less.

If you have questions regarding the charges on your utility bill, please call 972 230-9627.

The Utility Billing Department Offers Options for Paying Your

The DeSoto Utility Billing Department offers several options for paying your bill. If you prefer to point and click in your PJs, you can pay your bill on-line by logging on to the city's website at

www.ci.desoto.tx.us. You can also pay your bill in person, at the Utility Billing window located in City Hall between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Extended hours are offered on Thursdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

If you choose the traditional method of mailing in your payment, please be sure the use this address:

**City of DeSoto
P. O. Box 550
DeSoto, TX 75123-0550**

Use of the city's physical address may delay receipt of your payment. If you have any questions, call the Utility Billing Department at 972.230.9627.

CITY CALENDAR

December

- 1 HomeTown Holiday, Parade of Lights, Tree Lighting - Town Center
- 3 Park Development Corp. Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 4 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 6 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 11 Town Center Development Groundbreaking - 10 a.m. Town Center
- 11 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 17 DeSoto Economic Development Corp. Mtg. - noon - City Hall
- 18 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 24 City offices and facilities closed for Christmas Eve holiday
- 25 City offices and facilities closed for Christmas holiday
- 25 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - Cancelled due to holiday

January

- 1 City offices and facilities closed for New Year's Day Holiday
- 1 City Council Meeting - cancelled due to New Year's Day Holiday
- 3 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 7 Park Development Corp. Meeting 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 7 Youth Sports Town Discussion Mtg. 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 8 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 15 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 21 City offices and facilities closed - MLK Holiday
- 21 DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Dinner Event
- 22 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 28 DeSoto Economic Development Corp. Mtg. - noon - City Hall

A Message From Code Enforcement

Our Code Enforcement Officers need your help to keep DeSoto looking good. They would like to remind residents to keep their property free of junk motor vehicles. A junk motor vehicle is any vehicle that is inoperative and remains inoperative for more than 45 days or is inoperative and does not have a current registration sticker or inspection sticker.

A vehicle that has been wrecked, dismantled, partially dismantled or discarded is also considered a junk motor vehicle. These vehicles may not be visible anywhere in the public view, public right-of-way, street or any other private property.

If you have a question about a code enforcement issue or would like to report a violation in your neighborhood, please call the Code Enforcement Office at 469.658.3075.

Holiday Schedule for Trash Collection

Since Christmas Day and New Year's Day both fall on Tuesday this year, there will be no trash service on these days. During the weeks of December 25th and January 1st, residents whose normal trash day is Tuesday will have their trash collected on Wednesday. The Wednesday recycling will move to Thursday and regular Thursday trash will be collected on Friday. Friday trash will be collected on Saturday and the schedule will return to normal on January 7th.

Duncan Disposal will also be collecting live Christmas trees on Thursday, December 27th and January 3rd. Please place your live trees on the front curb for recycling.

If you have any problems or questions regarding your trash collection service, please call the Action Center at 972.230.9600

DeSoto Dining & Dialogue Needs Guests for their next Dinner Event on January 21, 2008

Submitted by Daphne Brown, DDD board member

Race. It's one of the most untalked about subjects in America. Despite the need to talk about its implications from the church house to the schoolhouse, it remains shrouded in apprehension.

Why? Is it because of the apparent double standard between the races that seems to exist, as evidenced in the Don Imus situation where a derogatory comment across the airwaves uprooted his entire life while rap artists and their record labels continue to rake in millions of dollars from salacious sounding, female-hating lyrics.

Or is it that middle America is tired of race being made the scapegoat in everything from college entrance exams and corporate quotas to cultural issues that begin with interracial marriages and ends with the popularity of hip hop in every day society.

It is painfully clear that there are more questions than answers.

One thing this discussion reveals is that everyone is guilty of perpetuating stereotypes whether in the name of humor or ignorance. Also, as the needed racial discussion has headlined television and radio talk shows and news publication, it is obvious that learning to get along with others, those who look like you and particularly those who don't, is something everyone needs a refresher course in.

Interestingly enough the City of DeSoto and its citizens have tackled race and its ethical, economic and educational implications. For more than four years, the DeSoto Dining and Dialogue organization has held intermittent discussions about the cultural and racial divide that wreaks havoc on almost every aspect of our society.

DeSoto has much to offer its residents: beautiful homes, rolling hills and good people, but like most other cities in America, DeSoto is at risk. Many feel this divide is the single most pressing matter plaguing the DeSoto community. Some have chosen not to deal with the problem by relocating to less diverse cities, but this is, at best, a temporary fix. For it is

estimated that by the year 2050 there will no longer be a minority population, and diversity will be the rule in most cities. Racial issues are not easy to discuss, but it is a conversation we must engage in if our cities are to be all they can be.

DeSoto already has in place a vehicle to make this conversation possible in DeSoto Dining and Dialogue. The program, originally organized by former DeSoto Mayor Michael Hurtt, is now run by a volunteer group of DeSoto citizens as an independent non-profit organization. The group seeks to bring DeSoto residents from different cultural backgrounds together over dinner, for the purpose of encouraging cross-cultural communication.

Dinner tables involving eight to 10 people are held at least twice a year. They start at 6:30 p.m. and end at 9:30 p.m., in homes, churches and restaurants all over the city on the same night. Registered participants are assigned a dinner location.

Anyone who lives or works in DeSoto can participate in the program by agreeing to be a guest at the next dinner. Guests need only bring an open mind and a willingness to share ideas and experiences. To balance the tables and enhance the experience, male and female guest of all ethnicities and ages from high school to senior citizens are needed. High school students can receive community service hours for participating. Trained facilitators provide structure to the evening and use techniques designed to minimize debate and maximize sharing and understanding. By participating in DeSoto Dining and Dialogue, we are starting the conversation that transforms DeSoto into:

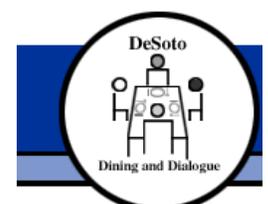
- A city where diversity is not only in the workplace, but a place where diversity works



- A city where cultural differences are not only tolerated but respected
- A city where the flag is not just waved but its principles are lived out
- A place where family values are not only preached but where every family is valued.

If you would like to participate in the next dinner event as a guest, please call Kathy Jones at 972.230.9648 or go to the DeSoto Dining and Dialogue website at desotodininganddialogue.org and submit a guest registration form to attend the January 21st dinner. **Registration forms must be received no later than December 18, 2007.** If you have already attended a dinner and would like to serve as a host, please let Ms. Jones know and the Dining and Dialogue board will contact you with details. As host, you agree to welcome a group of eight to 10 people into your home or other location and cover the cost of the meal.

On January 21, 2008 in at least fifteen homes and restaurants all over town, DeSoto Dining and Dialogue is starting the conversations that will make DeSoto a one-of-a-kind city where the American dream is a reality.



Concerned DeSoto Citizens 2007 Kwanzaa Fest Celebration Essay Contest

CDC has celebrated Kwanzaa in the City of DeSoto for the past six years. In an effort to enhance this celebration, an essay contest for all DeSoto school students will be included this year. Savings bonds will be awarded to the Grand Prize winner and to the 1st Place Runner-Up.

The student submitting the best essay on the subject *"What Kwanzaa Means To Me"* will be honored at the Annual Kwanzaa Celebration held on December 28th at the DeSoto Town Center Blue Bonnet Rooms.

Guidelines:

- Essay must be written by a student in a DeSoto school
- Essay must include student's full name, a contact telephone number and the name of their school.
- Essay must be double spaced, type written using no less than 100 words, and no more than 130 words.
- Essay must be submitted via U.S. mail postmarked not later than December 17th 2007

Mail essays to:

**Concerned DeSoto Citizens
Kwanzaa Fest Celebration Essay Contest
P. O. Box 371
DeSoto, TX 75223**

Please observe the guidelines. Failure to do so will result in disqualification. The review and selection committee will be made up of current CDC members. For additional information or questions, please contact: Thelma Clardy (972) 224-8015 or Joyce Williams (972) 230-1107.



CDC invites you to attend the 2007 Kwanzaa Fest Celebration on Friday, December 28, 2007 from 7 to 9 p.m. Kwanzaa is a celebration honoring our unity, self-determination, responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. This special event will present the symbols, customs, special foods and tradition of Kwanzaa to our community. Admission is free. For more info, call 972 230-4243.

DeSoto Senior Activity Center *presents.....*

Texas Hold'em Tournament Mahjong

Join the action at the DeSoto Senior Activity Center's monthly Texas Hold'em Tournament on Thursday, December 27th. Entry fee is \$5.00 with awards for 1st & 2nd place. Play starts at 1 p.m. and each player will deal. Call 972.230.5825 to RSVP.

New Years Resolution Party

The 3rd annual New Year's Resolution Party will be Friday, December 28th, 2007, at 10 a.m. at the DeSoto Senior Activity Center. First last year's resolutions will be reviewed to see how many came true. At the party we will also write down our new years resolutions for 2008 and save them for next year's party. We will celebrate our victories and laugh at our defeats while reviewing the year. Refreshments will be served.

Make learning the game of Mahjong your goal for 2008! Mahjong is an ancient Chinese tile game that involves skill, strategy, and calculation, as well as a certain degree of luck. The class will be taught by Treva Adams. She says that this is a challenging game and enjoys it more than bridge or other games that she has played in the past. The six week beginner's class will meet on Monday afternoons from 1 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. starting January 7th, at the DeSoto Senior Activity Center. The class fee is \$10.00. Call 972.230.5825 for more information. or to register for the class.

The DeSoto Senior Center invites you to attend their
Holiday Dance
Featuring Music by
Donny Hall
Saturday, December 22, 2007
From 7 to 9:30 p.m.
Tickets are \$4 at the door
DeSoto Senior Activity Center
204 Lion Street - 972.230.5825

Would you, or someone you know, like to receive an e-mail notification when new information is posted to the city's website? It's easy, just sign up for **Notify Me** on DeSoto's website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us. You can register to receive a notice when the latest version of the CityLights Newsletter is added or each time a new City Council Meeting agenda is posted on the website or to receive the newest job postings. Just click on **Notify Me** and follow the prompts.

JAN 2ND -
FEB 2TH,
2008

DeSoto Soccer
Association



Sign Up for Youth Soccer

- Ages 4-19 years of age
- Boys and Girls
- Ages 4-8 \$60
- Ages 9- above \$65.00

Sign up at the DeSoto Recreation Center
Or at desotosoccer.tx.com

Information 972.979.8553

Take a Seat in.....



Coming Attractions:

NIA Kids Christmas Production December 16th NIA Kids is a non-profit organization that nurtures and encourages the development of the natural gifts, talents and interests of young people through the fine arts and theater. Get in the holiday spirit by attending their Christmas production. For tickets or more information, please call LaTara Thompkins at 972.322.5413. This production is funded in part by the DeSoto Arts Grant Program.

The Real Meaning of Christmas by Chanina Mwikuta presented by **Top Hat Theater December 20th - 23rd** Wealthy business owner, Shannon Dyer, seems to have everything going for her. Good looks, her own hotel, a fine home, nice car—the perfect life. However, because of trials and hardships that she has faced in life, she has stopped believing in Christmas. Come see how the people in her life who are important to her, convince her to open her eyes to the real meaning of Christmas. Tickets are \$10. To reserve your tickets or for more information, call 214.809.0169 or 214.306.9697 or e-mail youtrophat@yahoo.com.

The Corner Theatre is located in DeSoto Town Center, 211 E. Pleasant Run Road, DeSoto, TX.