July, 2008



City Lights DeSoto, Texas



www.ci.desoto.tx.us

A publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department



Council Corner.....A Message from Mayor Waddle

I recently completed my first year as Mayor of DeSoto and had the pleasure of making the annual State of the City presentation to the DeSoto Chamber of Commerce. As I

prepared for the presentation, I realized that DeSoto has experienced a year of change.

The faces on the City Council have changed since May 2007. I was elected Mayor and Sandy Respess and Denise Valentine joined the City Council. We have also recently added Patricia Ledbetter in Place 2 and DeShandra Lockhart in Place 4. The City has also experienced changes in staff in the Development Services Department adding a new City Engineer, Construction Manager and Water Superintendent and we also have a new Managing Director of Parks & Leisure Services. New people bring new ideas and energy and they are helping us maintain our vision of quality services and a clean community with involved and engaged citizens.

Our city is also changing......as you can see if you've been to Town Center lately. Progress is being made on the mixed-use

development under construction at Town Center. The parking garage is nearing completion and the foundation for residential building one is in. Many of you have asked about the memorial bricks that were in the courtyard between the Civic Center and Library. These bricks have been carefully removed and saved and will be placed



Town Center Development parking garage.

at the base of the Clock Tower that will be built as a part of the development.

There are other changes around the city. We are in the final year of our five-year Capital Improvement Plan that began with the 2003 bond referendum. In the last 12 months, we completed the landmark tower at I-35 and Pleasant Run Road, expanded Central Fire Station and built a new fire academy building. The widening of Parkerville Road from Polk to I-35 is underway and DeSoto is working with Dallas County to widen Cockrell Hill Road. The last project in the five-year CIP is scheduled to begin soon. This project will improve the look of Hampton Road by adding new landscaping and replacing the old "cobra-head" light poles with the new square, brown lights poles that are seen in other parts of the city. With these projects complete, we will begin to look at new ones.

The city received good news recently when it was announced that Standard & Poor's had upgraded our bond rating from A+ to AA- which qualifies us for a better interest rate on future debt.

We are also beginning to see changes that could affect the city's financial condition. The residential housing growth that has fueled our tax base for several years is beginning to slow. We are predicting a 3% increase in new residential property values in 2009. While it is a good sign that an increase in housing values is expected, this increase is less that the 6% projected for 2008. DeSoto, like the nation, is affected by the general slowdown in our economy and problems in the financial markets.

As a result, we must refocus our efforts to diversify our tax base. Currently, 50% of the city's general fund revenue is derived from property tax and 70% of that amount comes from residential property. The City Council has met with the DeSoto Economic Development Corporation board to define their organizational structure and mission. In the coming months, the DEDC will focus on good growth with a renewed effort in commercial development. This is needed to offset the decline in new residential property values and will help us maintain our current level of daily service and capital projects. An increase in commercial development is also needed to keep our tax rate reasonable.

The good news is DeSoto is in a good position to attract commercial development in our industrial park, especially new warehouse space. Hillwood is developing the Crossroads Trade Center, a 550,600 square foot warehouse complex at I-35 and Centre Park Blvd. We also have three new hotels. The LaQuinta on I-35 is open for business, the Hampton Inn is expected to open late this summer and there is a Marriot Town Suites under construction on Hwy. 67. Banks are investing in DeSoto as well. The new First National Bank Building recently opened along with a new Comerica Bank, Chase and Bank of America.

As DeSoto changes, one aspect remains constant. Our citizens are our strength. DeSoto is a strong, diverse community with active, engaged and involved citizens. Evidence of this strength is everywhere. We have more than 50 registered and active homeowner's associations and neighborhood groups who work hand-in-hand with municipal government to improve our community. The city also just graduated our 11th Civic Academy Class bringing the total number of participants in the program to 178. Many of those graduates have gone on to fill open positions on city boards and commissions and provide a volunteer base for the city.

The mark of any good organizations is its ability to adapt to change and still remain strong. We are strong.

Bobby Waddle, Mayor

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Please Use Water Wisely

The easiest way to conserve tens of thousands of gallons of water around your home is to reduce the water you use on your landscape. Here are a few water-saving tips:

General Watering

Water your lawn before 9 a.m. or after 9 p.m. and avoid watering on windy days. Water in several short sessions rather than one long one. For example, three ten minute sessions spaced 30 minutes to an hour apart will allow your lawn to better absorb moisture than one straight 30 minute session.

Only water when your lawn is thirsty. Over-watering promotes shallow root growth making your lawn less hardy. To determine if your lawn needs to be watered, simply walk across the grass. If you leave footprints, it's time to water. Install moisture sensors in each irrigation zone (sunny, shady, etc.) to better determine irrigation needs.

Sprinklers/Sprinkler Systems

Homes with in-ground sprinkler systems use 35% more water outdoors than those who do not have an inground system. One reason may be that system controllers are not adjusted according to seasonal irrigation needs. Here are some water saving tips for in-ground sprinkler systems:

- Check sprinkler system valves periodically for leaks and keep the heads in good repair.
- Adjust the timer on automatic sprinklers according to seasonal water demands and weather conditions.
- Install a rain shut-off device on automatic sprinklers to eliminate unneeded applications.
- Make sure your sprinkler is placed so it only waters the lawn, not the pavement. Avoid sprinklers that spray a fine mist, which increases evaporation.

Drip Irrigation

Install a drip irrigation system for watering gardens, trees and shrubs. Drip irrigation provides a slow, steady trickle of water to plants at their roots through a network of hidden pipes and hoses. The systems are regulated by a controller that can be adjusted for different levels of watering according to the needs of the plants. Drip irrigation systems reduce overwatering, inefficient watering, weed growth, and the time and labor involved in hand watering.

If you have questions about your water service or would like to report a leak, please call the Action Center at 972 274-CITY.

CITY CALENDAR July

- 1 City Council Meeting 7 p.m. City Hall
- 3 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. 6:30 p.m. City Hall
- 3 Library Advisory board Mtg. 7 p.m. Library Conference Room
- 4 July 4th Holiday city offices and facilities closed
- 4 Lancaster/DeSoto Fireworks Show Lancaster Community Park 6pm
- 5 Superseries Youth Baseball Tournament Grimes Park
- 7 Park Development Corp. Mtg. 6:30 p.m. Recreation Center
- 8 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. 7 p.m. City Hall
- 15 City Council Meeting 7 p.m. City Hall
- 22 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. 7 p.m. City Hall
- 24 Presentation of FY2009 Budget to City Council 6 p.m. City Hall
- 28 DEDC Board Meeting noon City Hall
- 31 FY2009 Budget Workshop with City Council 6 p.m. City Hall

August

- 1 FY2009 Budget Workshop with City Council 6 p.m. City Hall
- 2 FY2008 Budget Workshop with City Council 9 a.m. City Hall
- 4 Park Development Corp. Meeting 6:30 p.m. City Hall
- 5 City Council Meeting 7 p.m. City Hall
- 5 National Night Out
- 7 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. 6:30 p.m. City Hall
- 7 Library Advisory Board Mtg. 7 p.m. Library Conference Room
- 12 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. 7 p.m. City Hall
- 19 City Council Meeting 7 p.m. City Hall
- 25 DEDC Board Meeting noon City Hall
- 26 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. 7 p.m. City Hall
- BO Briarwood Youth Fishing Day Briarwood Park 9 a.m.

Did You Know.....That An All-Digital TV Conversion is Coming

After February 17, 2009, full-power television stations will broadcast in digital only. In 1966, the U.S. Congress authorized the distribution of an additional broadcast channel to each broadcast TV station so that they could start a digital broadcast channel while simultaneously continuing their analog broadcast channel. Later, Congress mandated that February 17, 2009, would be the last day for full-power television stations to broadcast in analog. The switch from analog to digital broadcast television is referred to as the digital TV (DTV) transition. Broadcast stations in all U.S. markets are currently broadcasting in both analog and digital.

If you have one or more televisions that receive free over-the-air programming with a roof-top antenna or "rabbit ears", once the analog signal stops on February 17, 2009 you will need a digital-to-analog converter box to continue to watch broadcast television on that set. To help consumers with the DTV transition, the Government established the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program. Every U.S. household is eligible to receive up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, toward the purchase of the digital-to-analog converter boxes. Now is the time to request your coupon. For more information on the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program, visit the NTIA's web site at www.dtv2009.gov or call 1-888-388-2009. Cable and satellite TV subscribers with analog TVs hooked up to their cable or satellite service will not be affected by the DTV transition.

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DeSoto Is Going Green...By Offering Recycling Collection to Commercial Customers

The City of DeSoto began going green a couple of years ago and is now encouraging other corporate citizens to follow their lead. DeSoto's solid waste contractor, Duncan Disposal is now collecting recycling from commercial businesses in basically the same manner as they have been collecting residential recycling for many years. Here are the procedures:

- If you are currently a commercial customer for solid waste and you would like to have your recycling collected, please call 972.225.5252 to request the service.
- Once initiated, you will receive information about the initial set-up, billing and pricing information. You'll also be provided with one 95 gallon Polycart to hold your recycled items. The basic recycling charge is \$30 per month for the first cart. Additional carts can be provided at a fee of \$10 per month/per cart.
- Customers are responsible for bagging their recycled material in a clear or blue bag (available at local stores) prior to placing it in the cart for collection. Bagged contents must weigh less than 35 lbs. per bagged unit. Bagging of the materials to be recycled helps avoid contamination problems.
- Wednesday is the designated day for recycling throughout DeSoto and materials must be placed curbside by 7 a.m. for collection.
- Items acceptable for commercial recycling include:
 - 1. Newspaper (should be tied & bundled)
 - 2. Mixed paper or high-grade office paper
 - 3. Corrugated paper (boxes have to be flattened to a maximum size of 3X3 ft. tied and bundled.

4. Glass bottles (should be

rinsed)

or cut

5. Plastics & Aluminum (should be rinsed)

The City of DeSoto has offered desk side recycling to our staff for several years and in October, began recycling glass and plastics. We hope other businesses will follow our lead.

For more information on the Commercial Recycling Program, please call Tracie Hlavinka at 972.230.9689.

The Next Session of DeSoto Civic Academy Begins In August

The DeSoto Civic Academy is looking for participants. This program is designed to give citizens a behind-the-scenes look at the City of DeSoto. There are 11 weekly sessions each hosted by a different city department or group. Each class is designed to allow participants to experience hands-on how our city operates.

The first session is a Hollywood-style Opening Night hosted by the staff of the City Manager's office who serve a sumptuous dinner prepared by Debby Baugh, the City Manager's wife. They introduce participants to their "cast of characters" (the staff in Administration) and their duties. Next, the class goes behind-the-scenes at the Police Department to tour the facilities including the jail. They operate a radar gun, and walk through shoot/don't shoot scenarios. Development Services hosts the class at the Service Center and shows them the equipment used by our Street Department. The class even gets the opportunity to drive the street sweeper and other equipment. There's a tour of the city's Pump Station and class members see what it takes to make it possible for us to have water every time we turn on a faucet. DeSoto Fire Rescue hosts the class at Central Fire Station and serves some of their famous Fire House Burgers as they discuss all aspects of fire protection and emergency medical services. Staff from Information Technology, the Library, and Community Relations take class members on a scavenger hunt using the City's website. Human Resources, Planning & Zoning and Building Inspections also make presentations.

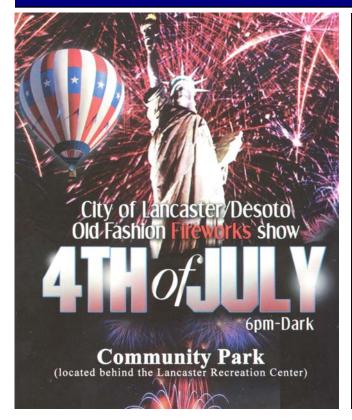
The Finance Department guides the class through the world of municipal accounting and budgeting by giving class members a fictional amount of money to run their imaginary city. The DeSoto Economic Development Corporation discusses how they attract commercial development to our city and Parks & Leisure Services discusses the city's beautification program and the wide spectrum of recreation opportunities available to DeSoto residents. The class also goes behind the scenes at Southwest Regional Communications, the 911 emergency dispatch center for DeSoto, Duncanville and Cedar Hill. Participants see dispatchers work a 911 call from start to finish. They can also get extra credit for taking "ride-alongs" with both our Police and Fire Departments.



11th Graduating Class of the DeSoto Civic Academy

At the final class, the City Secretary's office casts class members in the roll of Mayor, City Councilmembers, City Staff and citizens and walks them through a "mock" city council meeting. The meeting is accurately scripted to the smallest detail, however, the subject matter is so ludicrous that your sides will ache from laugher.

The next Civic Academy will begin in mid August, Please call Tracie Hlavinka at 972 230-9689 to register.



The City of Lancaster Invites DeSoto
To The Joint Fireworks Show
Friday, July 4th beginning at 6pm
At Lancaster's Community Park
1700 Veterans Memorial Pkwy.

Just off of N. Dallas Ave.

Live Music featuring the Andre Edmonds Band & the Triple Lindy Band

Free Hot Air Balloon Rides - 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Clowns, Magicians, Food and Fun

Spectacular Fireworks to Music Show at Dark



2008 NGA DeSoto Southwest Classic Muscle & Figure Pro Qualifier
July 25th & 26th Corner Theatre

Divisions include: Men's Bodybuilding, Men's & Women's Bodybuilding, Figure, Master Figure, Men's & Women's Master Bodybuilding, Super Grand

Masters. \$70 registration fee per division. For more info call Chris Glover at 972.230.9668.

Camp Fee Sam - Apm \$235 Monday - Friday Voucher for 2 tickets to Mavs preseason game Photograph and personalized trading cards Camper notebook Daily awards for each camper Reversible camp jersey Camp certificate Progress report And much more! For additional information please call 214-747-MAVS or e-mail hoopcamp@dallasmavs.com



Help Take a Bite Out of Crime by Planning a National Night Out Block Party in Your Neighborhood

This year's National Night Out event is scheduled for Tuesday, August 5, 2008 from 7 to 9 p.m. Crime watch groups, homeowners associations and neighborhood groups are encouraged to come outside their homes that evening and join together for a show of community support. This year, why not help "take a bite out of crime" by joining your neighbors in planning a block party on National Night Out?

If your neighborhood group would like to organize a block party and would like to schedule a visit by a City official or police officers, please contact Officer Cindy Mendez at 469-658-3055 or Tracie Hlavinka at 972.230.9689.