November, 2008



# City Lights DeSoto, Texas



www.ci.desoto.tx.us 972 230-9600

A publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department

# City Council Corner, A Message From Denise Valentine, City Council - Place 3



HOA's – What Are They Good For?
These days the publicity about
Homeowner's Associations always
seems to be negative. The State
Legislature will be discussing
legislation to limit their powers. But
there are many positives about being a
part of an HOA. Have you been
complaining that your neighborhood
does not look as pristine as in the
past? Homeowners working together
can make a difference.

An HOA is a group of home owners who band together to manage their own community. They can be formed as either mandatory or voluntary organizations and most have elected officers – you or your neighbors. While a neighborhood is new and still being developed, the HOA may be managed through a management company until a large percentage of homes are occupied.

The overall purpose of the HOA is to maintain the property values of the neighborhood. Although associations often concentrate on aesthetic values and their impact on the community, they also represent a "collective voice" to help homeowners communicate with city and county governments. From attractive masonry signs and colorful landscaping in the entryways to the neighborhoods to maintaining pools and play areas, an HOA can be a valuable asset to the neighborhood. They lobby the city staff for better ways to

enforce the city ordinances (affecting lawns, trash, abandoned cars, etc.) designed to keep DeSoto neighborhoods beautiful. As an association, they are an advocate for your neighborhood communicating with the police department to reduce crime. Unfortunately, we have seen foreclosures, evictions, and abandoned homes. Homeowners, as well as absentee landlords or banks and mortgage companies, must be held accountable for their property. An HOA is a group of homeowners wanting to protect their investment as a whole.

In DeSoto, the city encourages its citizens to form associations and engages them in 360 degree communication. They work together with HOA's to resolve issues and to maintain attractive and safe neighborhoods. The city organizes quarterly meetings with the mayor and offers an annual HOA Involvement Workshop. There is a matching grant program to assist neighborhoods in their quest to protect their property values.

Are you driving around your neighborhood wanting issues that affect your property value to be addressed? Become a part of the solution! I encourage you to support your Homeowners Association by paying your dues and getting involved in the meetings and social gatherings such as Block parties and National Night Out. Contact Tracie Hlavinka at 972.230.9689 or through the city web site at <a href="www.ci.desoto.tx.us">www.ci.desoto.tx.us</a> to find out about your homeowners association or to form one for your neighborhood.

Denise Valentine, City Council, Place 3

#### Desoto Town Center Is Finally Getting A Clock Tower

If you can remember when Town Center was converted from a Safeway Shopping Center to our Municipal Complex, you may also remember that the city had plans to build a Clock Tower on the site. Memorial bricks were sold to fund the Clock Tower but there never seemed to be quite enough money for the project. Now the Clock Tower dream is finally becoming a reality. It is currently under construction on the southwest corner of City Hall facing Pleasant Run Road. Featuring Westminster Chimes that will sound on the hour and half hour, it will be something to be proud of. When construction on the DeSoto Town Center mixed-use project began, the Clock Tower bricks were carefully removed from the courtyard between the Civic Center and Library and will be reinstalled around the base of the new Clock Tower when complete.



The Clock Tower is located on the southwest corner of City Hall.

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## A Few Simple Tips on Home Safety

Home is where the heart is; there is no other place like it. But most of all it's where you want to be comfortable, safe and secure. Your home should be one of your security blankets in a troubling world.

Home security is made up of many things, including landscaping and lighting, doors and windows, locks and keys, alarms and safes, and sometimes even your loving dog. All of these things work together to help comprise your safety.

An alarm system can also be used for life safety in the home. Carbon monoxide detectors, smoke or heat detectors, medical emergency buttons, and water sensors can save lives.

However, an alarm is only a notification system to let someone know that your first line of defense has been violated. As such, it only makes sense to have your own local emergency responders (police, fire and medical) monitor your alarm.

Did you know that in case of a fire, panic or medical emergency, your local city-provided monitoring service will have the appropriate emergency personnel dispatched to your home faster than any private alarm company? If your alarm is monitored by DeSoto's 911 Call Center, emergency responders are in route to you while the private alarm company is still making phone calls.

If you have an alarm monitoring system in your home, consider having it monitored by the City of DeSoto's 911 Call Center. There is no faster response to your alarm system than the response provided by your city. For more information on the City of DeSoto Alarm Monitoring Program, please contact 972.230.5248.

#### CITY CALENDAR

#### **October**

- 2 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. 6:30 p.m. City Hall
- 2 Library Advisory Board Mtg. 7 p.m. Library Conference Room
- 4 Toad Holler Creekfest First National Bank Building
- 6 Park Development Corp. Meeting 6:30 p.m. City Hall
- 6 Last day to register to vote in November election
- 7 City Council Meeting 7 p.m. City Hall
- 14 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. 7 p.m. City Hall
- 20 Early voting begins at East Junior High
- 21 City Council Meeting 7 p.m. City Hall
- 27 DEDC Board Meeting noon City Hall
- 28 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. 7 p.m. City Hall
- 31 Early voting ends

#### **November**

- 3 Park Development Corp. Mtg. 6:30 p.m. Recreation Center
- 4 Election Day Vote at Precincts
- 4 City Council Meeting 7 p.m. City Hall
- 6 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. 6:30 p.m. City Hall
- 6 Library Advisory Board Mtg. 7 p.m. Library Conference Room
- 6 "Neat" opens in the Corner Theatre
- 11 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. 7 p.m. City Hall
- 18 City Council Meeting 7 p.m. City Hall
- 24 DEDC Board Meeting noon City Hall
- 25 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. 7 p.m. City Hall
- 27 Thanksgiving Day City offices and facilities closed
- 28 City Offices closed for Thanksgiving holiday





On the left is a "before" picture of 519 Cedar Rapids and the picture on the right is how it looks today. This home was destroyed by fire in April, 2007 and DeSoto's Code Enforcement team has been working ever since to have it removed. The owner secured a demolition permit in December, 2007 but failed to tear the house down in a timely manner, as a result, Code Enforcement had to intervene to complete the project. This is an example of Code Enforcement's ongoing program to rid the city of sub-standard housing that is uninhabitable.

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# Help DeSoto Go Green By Recycling Aluminum Cans, Bottles and Paper

The City of DeSoto offers a curbside recycling program for all residents. Recycle green bins are available from the Utility Billing Department at a cost of \$5 each. New residents receive one complimentary, green bin when they initiate water service.

Recycling bins are emptied once weekly on Wednesdays and must be placed out for pick-up in the alley or front curb (where applicable) by 7 a.m.

Items that can be placed in the recycling bins include;

- Plastic—Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 (look for the Recycling Triangle usually found on the bottom of the container or the number)
- Glass All colors of glass bottles can be recycled. Only bottles are accepted. No plate glass, ceramic or mirrors.

- Metal All metal (tin/aluminum) food and beverage cans can be recycled. It's not necessary to remove the label, but please remove the lids and rinse out all food waste. Aluminum foil is not accepted.
- Newspapers, catalogs, magazines, junk mail, cardboard and mixed household paper can be recycled. Tissues, wet paper or paper contaminated with food products are not accepted. All cardboard must be broken down to a size that will fit inside your recycle bin. Larger boxes can be flattened and placed under your recycle bin for pick-up.

For additional information on DeSoto's residential recycling program, call 972.230.9600 or visit the city's website at <a href="www.ci.desoto.tx.us">www.ci.desoto.tx.us</a>, Participating in DeSoto's recycling program ensures that discarded materials are reused so that our landfills will have a longer life and continue serving our community for future generations.

# What Can Residents Do To Prevent Storm Water Pollution?

We can all work together to reduce and prevent storm water pollution. Some activities are federal government responsibilities, such as ensuring that federal lands are properly managed to reduce soil erosion. Some are state responsibilities, for example, developing rules to govern certain activities to protect waterbodies. Others are best handled by your community, such as by developing zoning or erosion control ordinances. Individual residents can also play an important role by changing certain everyday habits. For example:

- Please don't feed the storm drain! Do not dispose of used cooking oil and grease by dumping it into the storm drain.
- Select native and adapted plants for your landscape. These
  plants require less water, fertilizer, and pesticides to thrive,
  making your yard a Texas SmartScape.
- Apply lawn and garden chemicals sparingly and according to directions. Never apply lawn chemicals before a rain event.
- Keep litter, pet wastes, leaves, grass clippings and debris out of street gutters and storm drains. Never blow grass clippings into the storm drain. Outlets blocked by excessive debris, such as leaves and grass clippings, could lead to street flooding. Compost or mulch lawn debris instead.
- Dispose of used motor oil, antifreeze, paints, and other household chemicals properly, not in storm drains. The City of DeSoto participates in the Dallas County Household Hazardous Waste Program and DeSoto residents are encouraged to contact the Home Chemical Collection Center at 214.553.1765 for information on proper disposal of household chemicals.
- Deck the Halls, not the Creeks. By recycling litter and disposing of trash properly, you can help keep it out of the waterways.
- Clean up spilled brake fluid, oil, grease and antifreeze. Do not hose them into the street where they go down storm drains and can eventually reach local streams and lakes.

- Control soil erosion on your property. Plant ground cover and stabilize erosion-prone areas. This can be done by using mulch for soil stabilization.
- Wash your car at a commercial car wash facility. Washing
  cars on driveways or streets will result in the cleaning
  products flowing directly into the storm drain and into a
  nearby stream, lake, or river. Washing your car on your lawn
  allows the soil to remove some of the pollutants. Using a
  commercial car wash facility will ensure that the water and
  pollutants go to a water treatment facility before entering local
  water bodies.
- Learn to recognize what types of discharges to the storm drain system are allowed and not allowed. Report any signs of illegal discharge to your municipal storm water management service by calling 972.230.9600.



Look for storm drains in your neighborhood marked with this logo which indicates that this storm drain flows to the creek. These drains are meant for rain water only and are not connected to a water treatment facility. It is vital that grass clippings, fertilizers and other pollutants are not washed down these drains to prevent pollution of our creeks and rivers.

# DeSoto's Parade of Lights Will Kick-off the Holiday Season On December 6th

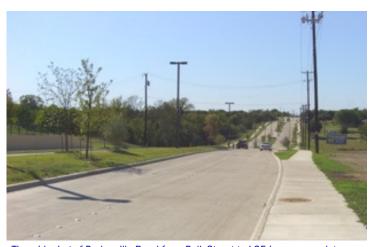
There's a touch of fall in the air which means that planning is underway for the 36th Annual Holiday Parade of Lights. The parade is always on the first Saturday in December and signals the beginning of the Holiday Season. It will take place this year on December 6th at 6pm. The parade is going back to it's traditional route and line-up will take place behind the DeSoto ISD Administration Building at 200 E. Belt Line Road and the parade will travel west on Belt Line and turn north on Hampton Road eventually turning east on Pleasant Run at DeSoto Town Center. The parade theme is Candyland.

The DeSoto Chamber and City of DeSoto are partnering to host the parade but we need your participation to make it a success. Parade applications can be downloaded from the city's website at <a href="https://www.ci.desoto.tx.us">www.ci.desoto.tx.us</a> or by calling the DeSoto Chamber at 972.224.3565. We invite churches, scouts, youth sports associations, school groups and anyone who loves a parade to submit an application and start making plans to participate. The deadline for early bird registration is Friday, November 14, 2008.

The City of DeSoto is also looking for citizen volunteers who would like to help with the parade line-up on December 6th. If you an help, please call Kathy Jones at 972-230-9648.

# **Holiday Trash Schedule**

Duncan Disposal, the city's solid waste contractor, will observe the Thanksgiving Holiday on Thursday, November 27th and no trash will be collected that day. The normal schedule will shift by one day for the remainder of that week and regular Thursday customers will have their trash collected on Friday the 28th. Regular Friday customers will have their trash collected on Saturday, the 29th and the normal schedule will resume on Monday, December 1st. If you have questions regarding your trash service, please call the Action Center at 972.230.9600.



The widening of Parkerville Road from Polk Street to I-35 is now complete. Parkerville has been expanded to a four-lane divided roadway with new lighting, median landscaping and sidewalks. Funding for this project was approved by voters in the 2003 bond referendum.

#### Take a Seat in .....



#### Coming Attraction:

### "NEAT" by Charlayne Woodard November 6th through November 23rd presented by the African American Repertory Theater

In the oral traditions of West Africa, on a bare stage, "Neat" is the magnificent story of the remembrance of Charlayne Woodard's real-life brain damaged Aunt, Neat, and the profound change she brought to her life. Aunt Neat, with her enormous love, energy, simplicity and magnificent clarity, teaches the young Charlayne what it is to cherish life. A magical, compelling, portrait of a young woman's coming of age, "Neat" is the story of an urban African-American girl bursting into adulthood, experiencing first love, and embracing both black-pride and feminism. An evening of pure joy, compelling insight and hopefulness, "Neat" is an inspiration for every family.

**THE REVIEWS:** "Powerful, heartbreaking and beautiful..." —NY Times. "Neatly done...Engaging..." —NY Post. "Radiant, exuberant and gorgeous..." —NY Newsday. "Dazzling..." —LA Times. "Affectionate, funny and moving..." —Associated Press. "Joyous...winning...will touch your heart." —Newhouse Newspapers. "Extraordinary..." —Gannett Newspapers.

The preview of "Neat", directed by Bill Ray, will be held on Thursday, November 6, 2008 at 7:30 pm. Tickets for the preview are \$10. The play opens Friday, November 7, 2008 and continues through November 23rd on Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and matinees at 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays at DeSoto's Corner Theatre next door to the Recreation Center. Tickets for evening performances are \$20 and matinees are \$15. To purchase tickets or for more information on the African American Repertory Theater, visit their website at <a href="https://www.aareptheater.com">www.aareptheater.com</a> or call 972.572.0998.

# Winter Jam, An Evening of Stories of Naughty and Nice for the Entire Family. Friday, December 5th, 7p.m.

If you love a great story, the Dallas Storytelling Guild invites you to join them at DeSoto's Corner Theatre at 7 p.m. on Friday, December 5, 2008 for an evening of holiday stories. This event features Regional and National storytellers; DeeCee Cornish, Kathy Culmer, James Ford, Eric Strong and DeSoto's own Toni Simmons. Tickets are \$7.50 for adults, children 12 and under are \$5. To purchase tickets or for information on groups sales, contact the Dallas Storytelling Guild at <a href="www.dallasstorytelling.org">www.dallasstorytelling.org</a>. This program is made possible in part by a grant from the DeSoto Arts Commission. The Corner Theatre is located in DeSoto Town Center next door to the Recreation Center at 211. E. Pleasant Run Road.