

July, 2007



City Lights DeSoto, Texas

A publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department



Council Corner - A Message from Virgil Helm



As I reflect back on the five years that I have served on the City Council, I can identify many positive

milestones that DeSoto has reached. Of course our highlight was being named as an All America City in 2006. Another highlight is the Town Center project. Work will begin on that project about January 2008. However, before that work can start, some re-modeling work must be completed on City Hall. The re-modeling work entails building a surface parking lot next to City Hall on Pleasant Run and moving building entrances. There are other new economic development projects, separate from the Town Center project, that will be starting in the very near future. Aren't these exciting

times for our City?

Some things happen as a result of the evolutionary process that apparently is in place in our universe. I believe that real progress results from a group of dedicated people working together as a team. DeSoto receiving the All America designation is a great example of that teamwork. I'm convinced that DeSoto's progress is a result of many people working together to make good things happen. The real heart of our progress is the citizens that serve on our boards and commissions.

If you doubt my statement, go by the DeSoto City Library and review the plans that the Library Board is developing to keep our Library in front of the pack. If you're not convinced at this point, talk to Linda Zander who chairs the Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board - but don't be

surprised if Linda has you committed to some project before you finish the conversation. Visit with Don or Marikay Dewberry, and let them tell you about the activities that they are involved with. I don't have space to list all the projects our legion of volunteers are working on - but all are contributing to making DeSoto a better place to live.

A dynamic city must constantly infuse new talents on their boards and commissions to remain on the cutting edge of progress. We are currently looking for volunteers to fill vacancies that exist on the Planning and Zoning Commission, the DeSoto Economic Development Corp. Board, and the Zoning Board of Adjustment just to name a few. A full description of the duties of each board or commission is contained on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter. The City's web

site at www.ci.desoto.tx.us also has this information along with applications that can be downloaded. Or if you're like me and haven't completely converted to the electronic age, visit DeSoto Town Center for more information. You'll be absolutely overwhelmed with the things that are in progress.

While you're here, don't be surprised if the Mayor, City Manager, or a City Council Member sees you and says "let me show you why we need you to volunteer for the City" I think you will agree with me - good things are in the future for DeSoto, but we need your help to make them happen!

**Virgil Helm
City Council
Place Two**

The Town Center Project is Moving Forward

The City moved one step closer to beginning the first catalyst project toward the goal of revitalizing the Hampton Road Corridor. At a recent meeting, representatives of Trammell Crow's High Street Residential Division presented artist's renderings and the final costs to the City Council who agreed to move forward on the project proposed for the parking lot of DeSoto Town Center.

This project, the first of three catalyst projects suggested by the RTKL study, is a mixed-use development. It will include 35,600 sq. ft. of retail space, 135 one and two bedroom residential units and a 360 space parking garage. The development embraces the new urbanism trend with a mix of retail and residential units tied to our existing municipal complex. This concept provides consumer traffic for retail establishments both during the day as patrons visit the Library, City Hall and Recreation Center and in the evening as Town Center residents return home to patronize shops and restaurants in the development.

The price tag for the project will be \$17.9 million. During preliminary engineering work, it was discovered that a 54 inch storm water line runs under the existing parking lot. Relocating this line added \$750,000 to the total cost for the project announced in January.

"The exact location of the line was unknown to everybody," according to Art Lomenick with High Street. "This was an expense we were not equipped to handle."

Councilmember, Sandy Respass asked how future cost increases such as this would effect the City. Lomenick confirmed that once the final agreement is in place, the City's participation is capped and any future cost increases would be High Street's sole responsibility. The City's participation in the project is \$11.1 million of which \$2.5 million represents the value of the land.

It is anticipated that the project will take 13 months to complete and construction is



scheduled to begin in early 2008. Since the front side of Town Center will be inaccessible during construction, an additional parking lot east of City Hall will be built by December, 2007. This lot will be the main parking facility for the complex until the project is complete. Structural changes will also be made to what is now the back side of City Hall making it our temporary front door.

"We know this is obviously very disruptive for our city," said Jim Baugh, City Manager. "City staff is working hard to minimize the disruption. Please stop by City Hall and take a look at the project drawings, I think you'll be as excited with it as we are."

For more information on the Town Center Project, please call 972.230.9643.

Did You Know.....?

City Ordinance requires that all residential garbage be put in a plastic garbage bag for collection? However in recent years, we have noticed that DeSoto residents are placing their garbage in cans without using the plastic bags. This causes problems for our solid waste contractor, Duncan Disposal, because they must pick up the can and dump it in the truck rather than grabbing a bag and tossing it in. When emptying the cans, garbage that is not bagged can miss the truck and be scattered along the alley or street.

City of DeSoto Ordinance, Article 13.800 Garbage, Trash and Refuse, Section 13.807 Containers states: "Residential customers shall utilize a plastic refuse bag that is designed and sold for the purpose of placing garbage, trash, or refuse in it for disposal." All trash must be placed in a 20-to-30 gallon plastic refuse bag, with at least a 2-ml strength/thickness rating.

To help keep our city clean and free of blowing garbage, we ask for your help by complying with this ordinance. Habitual offenders will be fined.

To help you comply with this ordinance, Duncan Disposal offers trash bags for sale. The 30 X 37", 2 ply bags are \$9 for a 50 bag roll and can be purchased at DeSoto City Hall at the Water Utilities counter.

It is acceptable to place bagged garbage in a garbage can. However, the can must be 20-to-30 gallon capacity – a size that is easy for workmen to empty. A good guideline is to limit garbage receptacles to no more than 50 pounds.

If you have any questions, please contact the City of DeSoto, Action Center at (972) 274-CITY (2489).



Here's a good example of what NOT to do. As you can see, some of the garbage is bagged but some is loose in the trash can and recycling bin. City Ordinance requires that all garbage must be bagged. If there is a stiff wind, the loose garbage can blow out of the can and down the alley as it's being dumped into the truck. Please be sure to bag your garbage and help keep DeSoto litter free.

KnoWhat2Do



In case of emergency, **KnoWhat2Do!** Unstable weather and other potential hazards can result in emergency situations. In DeSoto and North Central Texas, there are many skilled and caring emergency professionals ready to help if and when disaster strikes. But you are your own best protection. The KnoWhat2Do Web site at www.knowwhat2do.com was developed

through the collaboration of our North Central Texas Regional governments to teach you how to Think, Prepare and Act to protect your personal safety and the safety of those around you. The City of DeSoto encourages you to KnoWhat2Do by reviewing this material.



CITY CALENDAR

July

- 2 Park Development Corp. Meeting 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 3 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 4 City Offices & Facilities Closed for July 4th Holiday
- 4 Old Fashioned 4th Fireworks Show at Grimes Park - 6:30 p.m.
- 5 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 10 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 17 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 19 Board & Commission Fair - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 24 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 26 FY 07-08 Budget Workshop - 6:00 p.m. - City Hall

August

- 2,3, 4 FY 07-08 Budget Workshops— 2nd & 3rd @ 6:00 p.m. 4th @ 9 a.m. - City Hall
- 6 Park Development Corp. Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 7 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 7 National Night Out - 6 to 9 p.m.
- 9 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 14 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 21 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 25 Briarwood Kids Fishing Tournament - Briarwood Park - 9 a.m. to noon
- 28 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall

Board & Commission Fair - July 19th

The DeSoto City Council is looking for willing volunteers to fill current openings on the City's standing boards and commissions. As a result, we'll host a Board & Commission Fair on July 19, 2007 at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

If you have always wanted to be a part of the decision-making process in your city and have been a DeSoto resident for at least 12 consecutive months, we would like to invite to attend this event. Representatives from each board or commission will be on hand to answer any questions and share their first hand experiences with you. Here's a brief overview of the duties for each board or commission:

Arts Commission

- Composed of seven members serving two year terms
- Meets on an as-needed basis
- Commission reviews grant applications and makes recommendations to the City Council on requests for funding through the City's Arts Grants Program
- Produces the annual DeSoto Star Search Competition

Building & Standards Commission

- Composed of five members and four alternates serving two-year terms
- Meets at City Hall on an "as needed" basis
- Hears and decides appeals of orders, decisions and determinations

- Serves as an advisory commission to review and recommend ordinances to the City Council

Civil Service Commission

- Composed of three members serving two year terms
- Meets on an as needed basis
- Commissioners must have been a resident of DeSoto for more than three years
- Commissioners must be over the age of 25
- Commissioners may not have held a public office within the preceding three years
- Commission may investigate and report on all matters relating to the enforcement and effect of Chapter 143 Texas Local Government Code
- Commission determines whether the Chapter and rules are being obeyed
- Commission may hear appeals to decisions made under Chapter 143 of the Texas Local Government Code

DeSoto Economic Development Corp. Board

- Composed of five members serving three-year terms which expire on December 31
- Meets on the 4th Monday each month at noon at City Hall, special meetings may be (cont. page 3)



Economic Development Corner

The DeSoto Economic Development Corporation continues to respond to increased activity

and interest in development opportunities in the Eagle Business and Industrial Park.

The most recent news is that Hillwood Investment Properties is beginning construction on a new building. Hillwood previously completed site work on Crossroads Trade Center, a 113-acre development located on the northwest corner of Centre Park Blvd. and I-35E. At full build-out, this development could include a 1.8 million square foot, build-to-suit distribution center comprised of three multi-tenant buildings.

In anticipation of an ever growing need

for national and international companies to have a distribution presence in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, Hillwood has moved forward with their interest in DeSoto. They are now in the final stages of designing and permitting a 550,000 sf spec building in Crossroads Trade Center. The tilt-wall shell spec building is scheduled for completion by the fourth quarter of 2007. Because the City of DeSoto is conveniently located in close proximity to multiple major Interstates and highways, Crossroads Trade Center has been of interest to several significant projects actively seeking distribution space in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Having a shell spec building in place will certainly heighten interest in development and business opportunities in DeSoto and strengthen the industrial presence in our City. The DeSoto EDC is proud to have Hillwood Investment Properties as a development partner and looks forward to working with new corporate tenants as Crossroads Trade Center continues to flourish.

The DeSoto Economic Development Corporation exists to plan, promote, finance, and create opportunities for the retention, growth, and attraction of enterprises that enhance the tax base, quality of life, and level of employment for the citizens of DeSoto – WE ARE WORKING FOR YOU! If you have any questions related to economic development in the City of DeSoto, please contact the DEDC at 972-230-9611.



Continued from page 2 - Board & Commission Fair - July 19th

called as needed

- Promotes quality development within the City of DeSoto
- Oversees funds earmarked to improve and develop DeSoto's commercial and industrial base
- The City Council shall consider an individual's experience, accomplishments, and educational background in appointing members to the Board. Each Director shall meet at least one (1) of the following four (4) qualifications:
- 1. Serve, or have served, as Chief Executive Officer of a Company; or
- 2. Serve, or have served, in a position of Executive Management of a Company; or
- 3. Serve, or have served, in a professional capacity; or
- 4. Have experience equivalent to any of the above qualifications

In addition to the above qualifications, each member must be bondable.

Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board

- Composed of seven adult members and two student members serving two year terms
- Meets on the first Thursday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall
- Educates the public on litter control and prevention programs
- Initiates, plans and coordinates litter control and prevention programs
- Encourages the planting and preservation of trees, shrubs and flowers
- Promotes a safer, healthier and more beautiful community
- Stimulates interest and action toward

conversation of resources through recycling

Library Board

- Composed of seven members serving two-year terms
- Meets the first Thursday of the month in the Library Assembly Hall
- Makes recommendations to City Council concerning Library policies and regulations
- May serve as representative to various local, regional and state library organizations and as lay representative to the Northeast Texas Library System

Park Development Corporation Board

- Composed of seven members serving two year terms
- Meets the first Monday of the month at City Hall
- Oversees funds earmarked for improving and developing DeSoto's parks using the proceeds from 4-B sales tax
- May raise funds through issuance of bonds, notes or other debt instruments, and secures matching funds from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

Planning & Zoning Commission

- Composed of seven members serving three-year terms
- Meets the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at City Hall, special meetings may be called as needed
- Recommends approval or disapproval of changes in the City's Zoning Ordinance, Comprehensive Master Plan, and Major Thoroughfare Plan
- Reviews and updates the City's Comprehensive Plan
- Serves as the Capital Improvement Advisory

Committee to the City Council and provides Impact Fee Advisory

Tri-City Regional Animal Shelter Advisory Board

- Composed of three members, one from each of the cities of DeSoto, Duncanville and Cedar Hill each serving three-year terms
- Meets on an as-needed basis
- Reviews and considers Shelter policies
- Makes recommendations and serves as an Advisory Board to the City Councils of the three cities

Zoning Board of Adjustment

- Composed of five members and four alternates serving two-year terms
- Meets when there is a case to be considered on the third Thursday of the month
- Authorizes expansion or continuation of non-conforming structures and variances to the Zoning Ordinance under certain conditions
- Hears and decides appeals that allege error in an order, requirement, decision or determination by an administrative official

Applications will be available at the Board & Commission Fair on July 19th and are available in the City Secretary's Office in City Hall at Town Center, 211 E. Pleasant Run Road or may be downloaded from the City's website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us. The deadline for submitting completed applications is Monday, July 23, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. The City Council will conduct interviews on Monday, July 30, 2007. If you have any questions or need further information regarding serving on any of DeSoto's Boards or Commissions, please call City Secretary, Anell Shipman at 972.230.9646. She may also be reached via e-mail at ashipman@ci.desoto.tx.us.

National Night Out is August 7th - Have You Planned Your Block Party?

This year's National Night Out event is scheduled for Tuesday, August 7, 2007 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.



Last year, the South Meadows HOA hosted a Hula Hoop contest during their National Night Out Block Party.



Residents in Club Parc enjoyed an ice cream social last year on National Night Out.

A Few Simple Tips Can Keep Your Home Safe This Summer

As you prepare to leave town for summer vacation, remember these safety tips. Don't send a message to criminals that you're not home. Leave blinds open in their usual position. Have mail and packages picked up, forwarded or held by the post office. Lower the sound of your telephone bell so it can't be heard outside. Arrange to have your lawn mowed. Stop newspaper deliveries. Ask a friend to pick up "throwaway" newspapers and circulars. Use automatic timers to turn lights on and off in your living room and bedrooms at appropriate times. Consider connecting a radio to a timer. Tell police and dependable neighbors when you plan to be away and join with your neighbors to keep a close watch on what's happening in your area.

If you have an alarm monitoring system, consider having it monitored by the City of DeSoto's 911 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.

Payphones are Becoming a Thing of the Past

Historically, public payphones have been located in some of the city parks. Over the last several years, as cell phones have become more common, and pay phones used less and less, AT&T has been charging the city a monthly fee to keep these phones. The fee has increased this year to the point where the city would be paying nearly \$7,000 to keep seven phones. In addition, when AT&T takes money out of the phones, none of that money is given back to the city.

A recent analysis by our Information Technology Department and AT&T showed that the average daily usage of all the phones over the last 13 months is .12 a day. This is a significant cost to the city that is obviously not of benefit to the vast majority of citizens. At budget discussions in May, the City Manager agreed that the cost to keep these phones is no longer justified and the phones could be removed. Over the next month, all payphones in city facilities will be removed at a cost savings to the taxpayers of almost \$7,000 a year.

The Next DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Dinner Is Scheduled for September 22, 2007

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 now has a vehicle to make this conversation possible. It is called DeSoto Dining & Dialogue. The program, run by a volunteer group of DeSoto citizens as an independent non-profit organization, seeks to bring DeSoto citizens from different cultural backgrounds together over dinner, for the purpose of encouraging cross-cultural communication.

Dinner tables involving 8 to 10 people are held twice a year. They start at 6:00 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 scheduled for Saturday September 22, 2007. Guests need only bring an open mind and a willingness to share ideas and experiences. To balance the tables and enhance the experience, both male and female guest of all ethnicities and ages are needed. High school students can receive community service hours for participating. Trained facilitators at each dinner provide structure to the evening and use techniques designed to minimize debate and maximize sharing and understanding.

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 September 22nd dinner. **Registration forms must be received no later than August 20, 2007.** If you have already attended a dinner and would like to be a host, please let Ms. Jones know and the Dining and Dialogue board will contact you with details. As host, you would agree to welcome a group of 8 to 10 people into your home or other location and cover the cost of the meal.

By participating in DeSoto Dining and Dialogue, we are starting the conversation that transforms DeSoto into the consummate American city;

**JULY 21ST -
AUGUST
25TH, 2007**



DeSoto
Soccer
Association

Sign Up for Youth Soccer

- Ages 5-19 years of age
- Boys and Girls
- U5-6 \$60
- U7- above \$65.00

Sign up at the DeSoto Recreation Center

Information
972.979.8553