

October, 2011



www.ci.desoto.tx.us
972.230.9600

City Lights DeSoto, Texas

A publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department



FY-2012 City Budget Calls For Slight Tax Increase on Debt Service

Over the past four years, the defined General Fund spending plan for the City of DeSoto has remained relatively constant in the \$29 million dollar range. Maintaining expenditures around \$29 million dollars in the General Fund has been a monumental task for City staff who have utilized every budgetary measure as well as means to decrease the possibility of reducing personnel, which would negatively impact service levels provided to City residents.

During the planning phase of the FY2012 budget, the City projected General Fund expenditures to exceed \$30 million dollars due to significant increases in operational and personnel costs. As in previous years, the administration has toiled with due diligence to reduce expenditures by combining programs and services. By incorporating this methodology, personnel and operational costs have been reduced to the very minimum in order to continue the quality services desired by City residents.

The FY2012 budget incorporated the following goals and objectives set forth by the City Council:

- Develop a budget that provided the same level of municipal services as in FY2011, with the defined -1% estimated growth factor.
- Prioritize the public services rendered by Police, Fire Rescue, and Code Enforcement when evaluating any reduction-in-force (RIF)
- Incorporate the projected increase in the Interest and Sinking Fund tax rate
- Evaluate the allocation process of funds for maintenance and replacement schedules
- Strategically develop a transition plan for all General Fund/Fund Balance expenditures that require more than one (1) year of funding
- Maintain personnel earnings at market level by employing the annual salary survey
- Utilize General Fund /Fund Balance for the following items:
 1. User Fee Analysis (\$15,000)
 2. Independence Day Fireworks Show (\$25,000)
 3. Neighborhood Grants Program (\$20,000)
 4. Summer Youth Program (\$75,000)
 5. Illuminated Street Signs (\$50,000)
 6. Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony (\$20,000)
 7. Summer Intern Program (\$25,000)
 8. NEOGOV Workforce Management Program (\$10,000)
 9. Economic Incentives (\$221,000)
 10. Hampton Road Pilot Landscaping Project (\$50,000)
 11. Corner Theatre risers to improve site lines (\$7,000)

In addition to the aforementioned items, the City Council also integrated funding for the following programs into the FY2012 budget:

- Project Create Community - \$10,000
- DeSoto Reads - Community-wide reading program - \$5,000
- DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Program - \$5,000

Over the years, the City of DeSoto has been extremely fortunate in terms of financial stability and growth. During this time, numerous capital projects were undertaken to increase the visibility and vitality of the community. However, over the past couple of years, the City has not been as fortunate as in the past due to the declining national housing market and unstable global economy. As with countless municipalities around the country and particularly in the North Texas region, DeSoto has experienced descending taxable assessed valuations after a few years of progressive growth.

Revenue forecasting has been difficult due to the continuing decline in property values. Final figures from the Dallas County Appraisal District for FY2012 indicated that the City's certified taxable value was slightly higher than the projected amount used to build the budget. As a result, the City will maintain the FY2012 O&M tax rate of 50.492 cents per \$100 of valuation. The debt service side of the tax rate will increase by 25.25 cents per \$100 of valuation due to debt issued in prior years. The FY2012 combined tax rate will increase slightly to 75.74 cents per \$100 of property valuation.

The FY2012 Budget is available for viewing on the City of DeSoto website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us.

New Water and Sewer Rate Takes Effect October 1st

The City of DeSoto purchases treated water from Dallas Water Utilities and our sewer is processed by the Trinity River Authority. Due to long-term debt incurred for infrastructure improvements and an increase in our contractual obligation to the Trinity River Authority, our water and sewer rates will increase by 6.1%. For a typical user this will result in an increase of approximately \$2.51 per month.

The city uses a three-tier rate structure, which encourages conservation by charging those who use less a smaller rate. The structure also allows those who choose to use more water the ability to do so with the understanding that they will pay more. The rate structure is based on usage and low volume users will see a smaller increase in their monthly bills than high volume users. The rate increase is effective, October 1, 2011.

If you have questions regarding your water service, please call the Utility Billing Department at 972.230.9627.

DeSoto's Government Access Channel Will Soon be Available to AT&T U-Verse Customers

For the last several years, the City of DeSoto has broadcast City Council meetings, Planning and Zoning meetings, DeSoto ISD Board of Trustees meetings, DeSoto Economic Development Corp. meetings and Town Hall meetings on Time Warner Cable Channel 16 in addition to other original programming produced by the Community Relations Department. The City has also been successfully engaging online audiences with live and archived webcasting of City Council meetings, Planning and Zoning meetings and Town Hall meetings for the past five years.

Recently, the City upgraded the Granicus system which facilitates the webcasting. This upgrade allows us to broadcast the City's government access cable channel on AT&T Uverse. Beginning in mid-October, AT&T Uverse customers will have the opportunity to view all of DeSoto's government access programming which was once only available to Time Warner Cable customers. The Granicus enhancement allows the City to transmit our video signal to the AT&T U-verse network, the Time Warner Cable network and the web simultaneously; dramatically improving the visibility of government access programming.

"Instead of purchasing two servers to perform this task, we were able to achieve this with a single box," said Kathy Jones, Public Information Officer for DeSoto. "As cable penetration rates go down, it was important for us to find a cost-efficient way to deliver our content to the broadest possible audience."

The upgrade also adds a few new features which make it even easier and more cost-efficient to manage and deliver vital information to the public through mobile access. Now, citizens can utilize MP3 (audio) and MP4 (video) downloads to watch or listen to their public meetings from any smartphone including the iPhone or Droid. Also, citizens will be able to share or embed videos quickly and easily across any social networking site. Check out the video portal on the City website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us to access these features.

Another new feature will help the City increase efficiency and lower administrative costs. Using an iPad app, the City of DeSoto will be able to save paper and promote productivity during their public meetings. Instead of printing hard copies of meeting agendas on thousands of sheets of paper, the iPad app gives our elected officials easy-to-use tools to take notes and mark follow-up tasks. Printing costs associated with paper agenda packet production are all but eliminated.

"This upgrade to our technology facilitates a whole new world of open government for our citizens," said DeSoto Mayor, Carl Sherman. "Our lives are extremely busy and attending public meetings can be difficult, but now our citizens can even follow us on their smartphones."

CITY CALENDAR

October

- 3 Poetry In Progress Mtg. - Library - 6 p.m.
- 3 Park Development Corp. Mtg. - City Hall - 6:30 p.m.
- 4 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 6 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - City Hall - 6:30 p.m.
- 6 Library Advisory Board Mtg. - Library Conf. Room - 7 p.m.
- 8 City-wide Garage Sale - Senior Activity Ctr. - 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- 10 DeSoto Arts Commission Mtg. - City Hall - 6 p.m.
- 11 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 13 DeSoto, TX Historical Foundation Mtg. - Admin. Conf. Rm. - 6 p.m.
- 14 "Two Trains Running" opens in Corner Theatre - 7:30 p.m.
- 15 Town Hall Mtg. - City Hall - 9 a.m.
- 18 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 20 Mayor's Quarterly Mtg. w/HOA reps. - City Hall - 6:30 p.m.
- 24 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - noon
- 25 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 27 DeSoto, TX Historical Foundation Mtg. - Admin. Conf. Rm. - 6 p.m.
- 29 Mayor's 360 Town Hall Mtg. - City Hall - 9 a.m.

November

- 1 City Council Meeting - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 3 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - City Hall - 6:30 p.m.
- 3 Library Advisory Board Mtg. - Library Conference Room - 7 p.m.
- 7 Poetry In Progress Mtg. - Library - 6 p.m.
- 7 DeSoto Arts Commission Mtg. - City Hall - 6 p.m.
- 7 Park Development Corp. Mtg. - Civic Ctr. - 6:30 p.m.
- 8 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 10 DeSoto, TX Historical Foundation Mtg. - Admin. Conf. Rm. - 6 p.m.
- 15 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 19 Glance @ Nance Gala Grand Opening of Nance Farm - 3 to 5 p.m.
- 22 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 24 Thanksgiving Holiday - city facilities closed
- 25 Thanksgiving Holiday - city facilities closed
- 28 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - noon

Woodlands On The Creek HOA Dedicates Bridge Named for Roosevelt Williams

On October 8, 2011 at 7 p.m., the Woodlands On The Creek Homeowners Association will dedicate the bridge at the entrance to their subdivision located in the 900 block of Plantation Drive. The bridge has been named for distinguished resident, Roosevelt Williams.

The DeSoto City Council authorized the official designation for Mr. Williams by Resolution in May, 2011. The Resolution recognizes Mr. Williams for his many civic and community contributions over the last 20 years. Williams serves as a charter member of the Woodlands On The Creek HOA as well as a member of the City's Planning and Zoning Commission.

The City of DeSoto Resolution authorizes the naming of the bridge as "The Roosevelt Williams Bridge."

What's Going On at the DeSoto Public Library?

FOOD FOR FINES DRIVE

Do you owe fines at the DeSoto Public Library? Do you have library books that you haven't returned in years? Would you like to clear those fines and do a good deed at the same time? Well, now is your chance! During Food for Fines Week, **Pay off your fines with food instead of cash!** For every can of food donated, the Library will reduce your library fines by \$1. That's right! **One food item = \$1 in fines.** Bring your food donations to the Circulation Desk. Up to \$20 in overdue fines will be waived for each donation from the following list of acceptable items:

- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Boxed pasta or rice
- Canned meat, fish, or poultry
- Boxed cereal, baking mix
- Canned soup
- peanut butter or jelly

All donated food will be given to the DeSoto Food Pantry to provide assistance to local families in need. The Food for Fines program will be conducted Monday, October 31 through Saturday, November 5, 2011. Patrons without fines are also encouraged to bring food donations to the Library.



Only non-perishable, undamaged, unexpired, labeled items will be accepted. No glass containers, candy, home baked, or home canned goods will be accepted. Food will be accepted for fines on returned materials only, not for replacement fees of lost or damaged items. However, if lost materials are returned, patrons may pay the fine with food items.

For more information please call the Circulation Desk at 972-230-9665.

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

Baby Storytime Every Tuesday 10:30 a.m. (ages newborn – 24 mos.).
Pre-School Storytime Every Wednesday 10:30 a.m. (ages 3 – 6)

Halloween Craft
 Saturday, October 29, 2011 at 4:30 p.m.
 Ages (4 – 7)

Cool Science Investigators (Learn, explore, and discover science)
 October 1, October 15, October 29, 2011
 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
 Grades 3rd – 6th

"Open The World—Book Buddies Program" continues on Thursdays from 10:15 am – 11:15 am.

The purpose of this program is to enrich the lives of children in our community through reading and to open the world to children through books.

During a series of six week programs throughout the year, adult Book Buddy volunteers will read with a buddy (child) for one hour each week on Thursday mornings. Parents with children ages 5-9 are encouraged to call the library's Information Desk at 972.230.9661 to register their children for the entire 6 week program.

BURIED UNDER OLD BANK RECORDS AND TAX INFO? Dispose of your old files and project your Identity at the Document Shred-a-thon

Identity theft is a serious problem in today's society. One way to protect yourself is to make sure that identity thieves aren't gaining access to your personal information through junk mail or other documents you have placed in the trash. The best way to assure this doesn't happen is to shred your junk mail and other personal documents before discarding.

If you don't have access to a paper shredder, bring the items you wish to shred to Ernie Roberts Park located at 515 East Pleasant Run Road on Saturday, October 22, 2011 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be a mobile document shredding unit on-site to shred your personal household documents for a cost of \$5 per box shredded or a donation to the Storybook Project. This donation can be in the form of a new or gently used children's book.

This Document Shred-a-thon event is being sponsored by the DeSoto Public Library and Altrusa International. The proceeds from the event will benefit the Storybook Project provided by the Texas Inmate Families Association which allows incarcerated parents to engage in the reading development of their small children. The DeSoto Public Library and Altrusa invite you to join them for "Make A Difference Day" at the Document-Shred-A-Thon. For more information contact Lucy Lucio at 972.765.7776.

Latest book of the series



SORROWHEART



First book in the series



**DeSoto
Public
Library**

**MEET
THE
AUTHOR
Oct. 13**

6:30 p.m.

YOUNG ADULT FANTASY

Call 972.230.9665 for information.

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**Mayor's 360
Town Hall Meeting**
Saturday, Oct. 29th 9 a.m.
City Council Chambers
Jim Baugh Government Ctr.
211 E. Pleasant Run Road

Mayor Carl O. Sherman invites you to join him for an important discussion on the future vision for DeSoto. The meeting will provide a formal presentation on the proposed convention center and mixed-use development project and provide an opportunity for open dialogue with residents. Mayor Sherman will answer questions about the project and welcomes your input. This meeting will be broadcast on the City's website and government channel. For more information call 972.230.9646.

ART AFRICAN AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER presents

TWO TRAINS RUNNING
by August Wilson

OCTOBER 14-30, 2011
Friday & Saturday Nights @ 7:30pm
Saturday & Sunday Matinee @ 2:30pm
Preview Performance on Thursday, October 13 @ 7:30pm \$10

To Purchase Tickets:
Box Office - 972.572.0998
Web - www.aareptheater.com

Sponsored in part by:

City of DeSoto Classical 101 J&C

THE CORNER THEATRE
211 E. Pleasant Run
DeSoto, TX 75115

Save the Date!!
November 19th
3 to 5 pm
for a
Glance @ Nance

This is the gala grand opening event for DeSoto's historic Nance Farm. Phase I of the restoration is complete and the DeSoto, TX Historical Commission is ready to show it off. Call 972.230.9643 for information.

