

DeSoto City Lights

A Publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department

Council Corner, A Message from Kristine Clark, City Council - Place 3



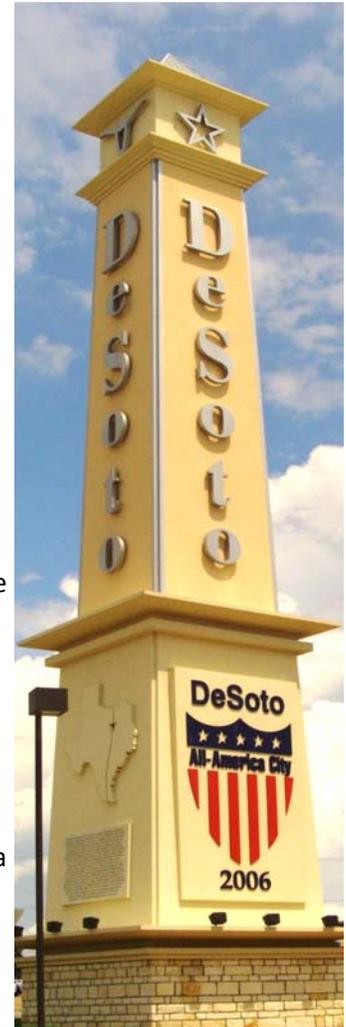
First, let me offer a big **THANK YOU** to the citizens of DeSoto for electing me to the City Council - Place 3 in May 2013. Here's a brief introduction: I am happily married (recently celebrated 15 years), have lived in DeSoto since 1999 and am blessed with two beautiful step-daughters. I am the owner of KRC Engineering, Inc., a structural engineering firm and a graduate of Virginia Tech with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. As a small business owner, I am familiar with budgets, proposals, contracts and financials. As an engineer, my job is to listen, research, and discuss

the problem before making decisions. As a Councilmember, I am using my experience and these same skills to make good business decisions regarding the citizens of DeSoto.

During the past six months, the heart of my focus has been to be proactive in communicating information about city council meetings and other city business by engaging our citizens via email and social media. I will continue these efforts to reach out to more of the community in new ways as I continue to serve and I will encourage others to do the same. I want to empower our residents by making it easier to receive information and participate in issues in which they are most interested. Citizen participation and active input to city officials is crucial to making informed decisions that reflect the outlook of the community and the best interests of the city. In the coming months, there are a few important issues that will have an impact on our city and its finances. Such as:

- The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which is a list of proposed projects that have a value of more than \$100,000 and a useful life of more than five years. Examples include street construction, drainage projects, construction of new city facilities, etc. A follow-up meeting will be held soon to decide whether to hold a bond election to fund the various projects proposed. If these projects are passed by a bond election, it would require a increase in our tax rate or a cutback in city expenditures to pay for it.

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City Calendar

January

1 New Year's Day - City Facilities Closed
 6 Arts Commission Mtg. Civic Ctr. - 6 pm
 6 Poetry In Progress - Civic Ctr. - 5:45 pm
 6 Park Board Mtg. - Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm
 7 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
 9 KDB Mtg. Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm
 9 Library Board Mtg. Library - 7 pm
 14 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
 21 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
 27 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - 9 am
 28 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm

February

3 Poetry In Progress - Civic Ctr. - 5:45 pm
 3 Park Board Mtg. - Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm
 3 Arts Commission Mtg. - Civic Ctr. - 6 pm
 4 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
 6 KDB Mtg. Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm
 6 Library Board Mtg. Library - 7 pm
 6 Friends of the Library Mtg. - 6 pm
 8 Daddy/Daughter Dance - Civic Ctr. 7pm
 11 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
 16 CDC Gospelfest -DHS Auditorium 4:30 pm
 18 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
 22 HOA Involvement Workshop
 24 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - 9 am
 25 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall - 7pm

The Construction in the DeSoto Recreation Center and Corner Theatre is now complete.

If you have attended a play or concert in the Corner Theatre and were frustrated because you had to leave the facility to use the restrooms, we are happy to announce that is no longer necessary. A project to add male and female restrooms to the lobby area of the DeSoto Corner Theatre (pictured at right) is now complete.



In order to facilitate the addition of the restrooms to the theater, the Fitness Center (pictured below) underwent extensive renovation as well. Changes were made to the floor layout that facilitated a much better traffic flow through the Recreation Center making use of space



previously dedicated to unnecessary hallways.

The Recreation Staff encourages you to work on those New Year's Resolutions to get in shape in their brand new, state of the art Fitness Center. The monthly membership fee is \$20 and

membership is open to anyone who lives or works in DeSoto. For more information call 972.230.9655 or just stop by the Recreation Center.

CONCERNED DESOTO CITIZENS (CDC) PRESENTS
GOSPELFEST 2014
THE ART OF PRAISE
 25th Anniversary Celebration
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH
DeSoto High School (Auditorium)
 600 Eagle Drive, DeSoto, Texas 75115
 (Concert Doors Open at 4:00 PM)
SHOWTIME 4:30 PM



Each year the City Council recognizes City employees who have been commended either by a citizen or coworker for performing "above and beyond" their regular duties. These employees are treated to a free lunch with the City Manager during the quarter of their commendation and a reception for their family and presentation at the City Council meeting once a year. Congratulations on a job well done!!

Municipal Court Automates Collections

Municipal Court Judge Scott E. Kurth announced on December 19, 2013, that the committee appointed to make the selection of a new collection agent for delinquent municipal court fines and costs has chosen Linebarger, Goggan, Blair & Sampson.

Judge Kurth stated that Linebarger has had a long-term relationship with DeSoto, and they met the challenge to provide the Court with a web-based interface with the Court's software that will automatically upload delinquent cases where defendants owe unpaid fines and costs.

"Linebarger's ability to meet our requirement for an automatic upload is cutting-edge technology and will remove the time-consuming and inefficient method of transferring the information by email," said Kurth. The new web-based interface is scheduled for installation on January 2, 2014.

Aside from the staff time saved, Judge Kurth said that the new interface will enhance the collection of unpaid fines and costs because there will be no delay in transferring the cases for collection on the 61st day after the fines and costs remain unpaid.

GovPayNet Program will be Installed at the DeSoto Jail

On January 22, 2014, technical support staff from GovPayNet will train and install the plug-n-play device that will connect the DeSoto Jail into the GovPayNet network of municipal jails. This will enable defendants and their families to pay past due fines, costs and bonds at one central location by phone or on-line 24 hours per day. Judge Scott E. Kurth, who successfully sponsored the adoption of GovPayNet by the DeSoto City Council, argues that GovPayNet will reduce the need for prisoners to be transferred from one jail to the next because there is now one central pay location on-line where payments can be made. This avoids the transfer of a defendant to another jail where the defendant has outstanding warrants. Furthermore, GovPayNet will permit a defendant's family and friends, who live out of town and out of Texas to make payment to GovPayNet 24 hours a day to secure the defendant's release. There is no cost to DeSoto for its participation in GovPayNet. All of the hardware is provided by GovPayNet at no cost and it guarantees each credit or debit card payment made so that DeSoto will not have to fight any charge-backs on credit or debit card payments. GovPayNet is funded by a service charge added to each transaction.

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- The Comprehensive Plan Review will be completed this year and it will become our city's road map for the future.
- City Elections will be held in May for two council positions: Place Two will be an open seat due to term limits and Place Four held by incumbent Councilwoman Rachel Proctor who filled the unexpired term of Deshaundra Jones.

If you are interested in learning more about these issues or any others, feel free to contact me at kclark@desototexas.gov. Remember that your elected officials are easy to contact because our email address and phone numbers are listed on the city's website at www.desototexas.gov. I am very interested in hearing from all the citizens about their views and opinions to make our city better. With involved and engaged citizens, I believe that DeSoto can thrive to become the best place to live, raise a family and retire.

Warmest Regards,

Kristine Clark
Councilmember - Place 3

Don't Let Clutter Snowball You...Get Organized!

Are you overwhelmed with stacks of papers on your kitchen counters or desks? Are you always looking for that paper hiding in a pile of clutter? It's a new year, and the DeSoto Public Library would like to help you with a new system to handle current papers and tax documents.

The DeSoto Public Library invites you to join Lorraine Brock and Kym Calloway of *Get Organized!* for a special presentation on, January 18, 2014 from 11 am to 12:30 pm. *Get Organized!*, a Dallas area based company who's focus is on organizing your home and your life, will host a program designed to help you get your papers uncluttered and organized...just in time for tax season! This program is free and open to the public.

The library is located at 211 E. Pleasant Run Road, in the DeSoto Town Center Complex. Free parking is available in the nearby garage. For more information, please call the library's Information Desk at 972.230.9661.

FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE LIBRARY. CALL 972.230.9661 OR VISIT WWW.DESOTOTEXAS.GOV/LIBRARY.

DeSoto ISD Fine Arts Dept.
& DeSoto Arts Commission

FINE ARTS Showcase

JANUARY 25
DeSoto High School | 10 to 4:00

Dallas Symphony Brass Ensemble, DeSoto HS Choirs & Renaissance Celebration, DeSoto HS Bands, McCowan, West & East Combined Choirs and MORE!



visit artsdesoto.com

Daddy Daughter Dance

February
8th
7 to 9 pm



DeSoto Civic Center
211 E. Pleasant Run Road
\$30 per couple
\$15 additional daughter
Tickets go on sale January 6th
For info call 972.230.9651



"Connecting Neighbors!"

Do you feel connected to the DeSoto Community?

If you'd like to connect with your neighbors and find out what's going on in the community, please take this as a personal invitation to attend our next free DeSoto Dining and Dialogue dinner event on March 1, 2014. Adults who live or work in DeSoto and care about our community are encouraged to attend. Resident high school students and their parents are also welcome to attend. We offer five hours of Community Service Credit for students who attend because their input is vital to the program. As a guest, all you have to do is attend and join in on the discussion. Repeat guests are also welcome. Please register your attendance at www.desotodd.org.

Dinner Discussion Topic:

What makes a great community?

The DeSoto Dining and Dialogue program was instrumental in DeSoto receiving the All-American City Award in 2006 and it sets DeSoto apart from other cities. For our next dinner event, DDD is going "back to the basics" by focusing the discussion on the elements that make DeSoto a great community. We invite you to join with your friends and neighbors and share your thoughts on what makes DeSoto an All-American City, what brought you to DeSoto and what keeps you here. This is also an opportunity for you to share your personal vision for our city in the future. Please follow the link below and register to attend this important event!

**Saturday, March 1, 2014
6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.**

For more information and to register go to:

www.desotodd.org
or call Kathy Jones at

972-230-9648

The deadline to register to attend the free dinner event is February 17th!



The Utility Billing and Municipal Court Payment Window Has a New Look

Heightened security is a fact of life now, and at City Hall, we take it seriously. The new glass payment window (pictured above) provides an extra level of security for our employees who handle cash.

"We have been lucky at City Hall to never have had a serious problem and we hope the new payment window and other security measures, now in place, will ensure that we never do," said City Manager, Tarron Richardson, Ph.D.

A metal detector has also been installed at the entrance to the City Council Chambers. It will be used by the Municipal Court to provide a safe environment for those involved in jury trials.