

September, 2007



City Lights DeSoto, Texas

A publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department



City Council Approves FY 2008 City Budget and Tax Rate

October 1st is the beginning of a new fiscal year for the City of DeSoto and a new budget is adopted along with a new program of work and tax rate. The Operating and Maintenance portion of our tax rate will hold constant in FY 2008 at 48.592 cents per \$100 of valuation. However, there will be an increase of 1.138 cents in the interest and sinking fund in the debt service portion of the tax rate to retire the 2003 bond debt. The combined tax rate for FY 2008 will be 70.973 cents per \$100 of valuation.

When developing the budget for FY 2008, the following objectives were considered:

- Maintaining the level of service currently being

provided to DeSoto residents.

- Providing market adjustments to city employees' compensation.
- Examining the "pay as you go" philosophy currently in place for the major maintenance and expansion of the water and sewer infrastructure to determine the sufficiency of the annual appropriation of \$2,250,000 in FY 2008 and beyond.
- Support, with the appropriate level of appropriation, the additional fire personnel added through the SAFER grant the City received in

2007. This grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, provided funding to cover employee costs for a five year period for six additional firefighters. This item refers to planning for the ongoing employee costs once the grant funding ceases.

- Continuing, at the appropriate level of funding, the management practice of planning for the timely repair and replacement of assets owned by the City of DeSoto.
- Providing for the restoration and ongoing maintenance of Historic Nance Farm.
- Maintaining the operating

and maintenance portion of the tax rate at the current level of \$0.48592.

Because the City of DeSoto is a service organization, a major portion of the operating budget is allocated to employee compensation and fringe benefits. Maintaining these at current market rate requires that adjustments be made each year. Specific jobs and their pay plans are compared with similar jobs in 10 other cities who are comparable to DeSoto. Based on the results of this salary survey, an increase in the employee car allowance due to fuel cost increases and a slight increase in employee health insurance, employee costs in the General Fund will increase \$1,304,427 over FY 2007.

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Have You Been Wondering Why Dirt is Flying Behind City Hall?

The City is building a new parking lot to be used while the one on the front side of Town Center is under construction once Trammel Crow's High Street Residential Division breaks ground on their mixed use development. Council recently gave them a green light to go ahead with the project that will include 35,600 sq. ft. of retail space, 135 one and two bedroom residential units and a 360 space parking garage.

Once construction begins around the first of the year, the front side of the complex will not be accessible to the public. As a result, work will begin soon to convert what is currently the loading dock into the new front entrance of City Hall. Patrons visiting the Recreation Center, Civic Center and Library as well as City Hall will park in the new lot currently under construction and enter the building using this new front entrance.

There is major inconvenience with any construction project of this magnitude.

"We know this is obviously very disruptive for our city," said Jim Baugh, City Manager. "City staff is working hard to minimize the disruption and we will do our best to see that it goes as smoothly as possible."

For more information and a construction schedule for the Town Center Project, please check out the city's website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us. Please see the project drawings on page four of this newsletter.



Do You Feel Safe in Your Home?

Feeling safe in our homes and businesses is of paramount importance to all of us. Here are some suggestions to enhance that peace of mind and the feeling of being secure:

- Install good locks on all exterior doors and windows.
- Have plenty of exterior lights including motion detector lights.
- Use interior lights on timers when you are not at home.
- Install an alarm system with sensors on all exterior doors and windows. Consider having smoke detectors, heat detectors and carbon monoxide detectors connected to your alarm panel as well. Placing sensors on gun cabinets and safe closets can also enhance your feeling of security.

If it makes sense to have an alarm system, then it should make sense to have it monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week by your local 911 emergency center. Alarm monitoring is now being offered as a fee based service by the City of DeSoto for \$25 per month. No long-term contract is required.

There is a cost associated with having your monitored system reprogrammed to be monitored by DeSoto's 911 Call Center. As a result, the City will waive the first three months of their monitoring fee to help offset any cost you may incur to have your system reprogrammed.

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.



**Monday, September 24, 2007 5 to 9 p.m.
DeSoto Town Center**

The DeSoto Chamber of Commerce invites you to Taste, Trade & Auto Expo of DeSoto, Monday, September 24th from 5 to 9 p.m. at DeSoto Town Center. This event will follow the same successful format that was used last year. Admission is free. We will use the entire Town Center complex with entertainment provided by local talent and food and vendor booths in the Civic Center. There will be a trade show highlighting Chamber businesses and you'll be able to see the new 2009 automobiles from local dealers in the courtyard. We are also organizing a classic car show. Local restaurants will be serving samples of their best menu items which can be purchased with coupons that will sell for \$1 each or 12 coupons for \$10. For vendor information, please call the Chamber office at 972, 224.3565.

CITY CALENDAR

September

- 3 Labor Day Holiday - City Facilities Closed
- 4 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 6 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 10 Park Development Corp. Meeting 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 11 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 15 VIVA DeSoto Hispanic Heritage Celebration - Town Center
- 18 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 22 DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Dinner Event
- 24 Taste, Trade & Auto Show of DeSoto - 5 p.m. - Civic Center
- 25 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 29 Economic Smart Fair - 8 a.m. - Civic Ctr. call 469.844.5422 for info

October

- 1 Park Development Corp. Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 2 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 4 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 9 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 14 Toyota US Open Triathlon 6 a.m. to noon
- 16 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 23 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall

The Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board is Looking for Student Members

The Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board's mission is: To promote interest and pride in improving the environment of the city by programs of litter control, beautification, recycling, awareness and respect and community involvement. They are currently seeking high school students who would be interested in helping them further this mission.

Board members believe strongly that young adults are a valuable resource in terms of energy and creativity and can provide an important link to children and youth by educating and making their peers aware. For that reason, the KDB Board is accepting applications from high school students who would be interested in serving a one-year term of office as full voting members of the Keep DeSoto

Beautiful Board.

Applicants must be willing to support and participate in as many KDB programs or activities as possible. Such activities may include community trash pick-ups, recycling programs, or educational efforts such as elementary school presentations on recycling. One of the many benefits of serving on this Board is that each student has an opportunity to earn those all important Community Service Hours required on college resumes.

Applications for a KDB Student Board Member position are available on the city's website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us or can be picked up at the city's Parks and Leisure Services Office, located at DeSoto Town Center.

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Economic Development Corner

The City of DeSoto is experiencing a boom in the hotel business! We recently celebrated the groundbreaking of the new Hampton Inn & Suites on the northwest corner of Centre Park Blvd at I-35E. The new Holiday Inn Express & Suites on Wintergreen Road recently opened for business. In addition to these new hotels, the MCM Grande Fundome (formerly the DeSoto Holiday Inn) is in the midst of an extensive renovation.

Now the site of the new La Quinta Inn & Suites, just south of Pleasant Run Road next to Chuck Fairbanks Chevrolet, is buzzing with construction activity. Once complete, the new La Quinta Inn will have approximately 47,000 sq. ft. with 75 guest rooms, and will bring a total investment of \$2.5 million to our city. The developer is also preparing a pad site in front of the hotel to

accommodate a future restaurant.

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.



THE HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS & SUITES
 1000 WINTERGREEN ROAD, DE SOTO, TEXAS 75625
 WWW.HOLIDAYINNEXPRESS.COM

La Quinta
 DESOTO, TEXAS

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The FY 2008 budget also includes increases in individual maintenance funds to insure that sufficient cash is available when scheduled maintenance or replacement of equipment is required. Allocations are made to these funds each year so that the budget includes funds for the replacement of vehicles, computers, furniture and specific equipment for fire and police.

Council added a new Code Enforcement Officer who will be hired mid-year and they increased their support of DeSoto Dining and Dialogue by agreeing to match any funds the group raises up to \$5,000.

There are also one time expenditures for the restoration of Nance Farm, the purchase of new budgeting software, in-car computers for Animal Control and Code Enforcement, Granicus mobile equipment, shelving for records management and NCTCOG aerial photos.

Local government has two major financing sources for operations, property tax and sales tax. The yield from property tax is projected to increase 7.3 % and is largely made up of new single family homes added

to the community in the past twelve months. The FY 2008 budget estimates a 5% increase in sales tax revenue.

The full FY 2008 Budget document is posted on the city's website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us and is also available at the DeSoto Public Library. If you have questions about the FY 2008 budget, please call 972.230.9635.

The Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board is Looking for Student Members

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Applicants must be a DeSoto resident in grade 11 or 12. You'll be asked to provide at least one letter of reference from a principal or a faculty or staff member. Student board members are accepted in September and serve throughout the school year. If a student serves as a Junior, he is eligible for re-appointment during his senior year.

Completed applications must be mailed by September 20, 2007 to Keep DeSoto Beautiful, Attn: Linda Zander, 925 W Pleasant Run Road, DeSoto, TX 75115.



DeSoto City Employees would like to send a huge thank you to members of the DeSoto Rotary Club and others who grilled burgers and hot dogs for their Annual Employee Picnic. In the top picture, Sonia Rhea watches the grill while Perry Holloway, Warren Adams, Don Gant and Rick Jones prep the burgers. The bottom picture features from left Bill Walker, Sonia Rhea and Kevin Lear with Sonic Drive-In and Warren Adams at the grill. Thank you, Rotary Club, for your dedication to community service!!

Triathlon's **First U.S. Open** Dallas ★ **October 14, 2007**

On Sunday, October 14, 2007, the Toyota U.S. Open Triathlon will travel through DeSoto on it's way to the finish line at Reunion Arena in Dallas. There will actually be 2 different race distances; an Olympic distance 1500m swim, 40k bike and 10k run and a Sprint distance consisting of an 800m swim, 40k bike and 5k run. The race will start at Joe Pool Lake with a quick point to point swim, all athletes will then complete a scenic point to point 40k bike ride from Cedar Hill, through DeSoto to Dallas and finish with either a one or two loop run in downtown Dallas ending at Reunion Arena.

DeSoto is happy to be a part of this exciting athletic event but we will experience road closures on race day. DeSoto Police have been meeting with race officials to coordinate the route that will proceed through DeSoto from Cedar Hill east along Belt Line Road and north on Hampton Road to Dallas. This major event will require portions of Belt Line and Hampton to be closed and traffic diverted from approximately 6 a.m until 11 a.m. Churches and business along the route will have limited access on that morning. DeSoto Police are working on a game plan to minimize inconvenience to our citizens and ask that you watch local media for specific information on road closures as the event approaches.

The Toyota U.S. Open Triathlon event in Dallas is the Life Time Fitness Series Championship and triathlon's first U.S. Open. As a result, the 5 top age group finishers from Minneapolis, New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles will be flown to Dallas to compete in the Championship with more than 2,000 other amateur athletes. To participate or for more information on the Toyota U.S. Open Triathlon event in Dallas, check out their website at www.usopentriathlon.com.



Artist's rendering of a an aerial view of the Town Center Project. This mixed-use development will be built in the parking lot of DeSoto Town Center. The project will enhance the existing facilities at Town Center including City Hall, the Recreation and Civic Centers and Library.



Local talent, Norma Valles con Mariachi will perform at VIVA DeSoto at 3 p.m. Norma is the Queen of Mariachi music in the DFW metroplex.



Free Admission
For info, call 972.230.9651

VIVA DESOTO!!

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

Saturday,

September 15th

Noon to 6 p.m.

DeSoto Town Center

Outdoor Amphitheater

Entertainment:

3 pm Norma Valles

4:30 pm Canterbury Dancers

Other Performers:

Conjunto Sela

Grupo Restauracion

David Allen

Red Letter Day

Jemir Live



Artist's rendering of a street view of the Town Center Project. Construction will begin after the first of the year on the mixed-use residential and retail project.