

DeSoto City Lights

A Publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department

The City of DeSoto Information Technology Department is Recognized by the 2016 Digital Cities Survey

The Center for Digital Government (CDG) announced recently that the City of DeSoto is one of 10 cities nationwide in the under 75,000 population category being recognized for using technology to improve citizen services, enhance transparency and encourage citizen engagement.

“This year’s top digital cities are using technology to ensure citizens can meaningfully interact with city government more easily than in any other time in history,” said Todd Sander, executive director of the Center for Digital Government. “From open data portals to enhanced connectivity and mobile platforms, this year’s top-ranked cities are actively promoting transparency, encouraging citizen participation and making it easier for people to do business with government. Congratulations to the winners!”

This year the survey honors cities in five population classifications: 500,000 or more; 250,000 to 499,999; 125,000 to 249,999; 75,000 to 124,999 and fewer than 75,000. DeSoto placed sixth out the ten cities in the fewer than 75,000 population category. The City of DeSoto has made great strides to improve the way our residents interact with their city’s government.

“DeSoto’s Digital Cities award is made possible by an organization-wide culture of innovation and creativity,” said Tom Figert, Director of Information Technology for the City of DeSoto. “We are the first city in our population category in the state since 2011 to receive this award. I’m very proud of the IT staff, the technical acumen of colleagues in other departments, and the expert guidance of our vendor partners. Together, we’re cultivating an environment of efficiency and productivity, expert support, and transparency that we think will serve our citizens well in the years to come.”

DeSoto was recognized for making strides in its transparency and Web presence that any large city would be envious of. Beginning with fiscal transparency, city officials have released a spending portal, making it simple for residents to identify exactly where their taxes go. DeSoto has been awarded for its commitment to transparency by the state comptroller, who designated the city a Platinum Member in 2014.

“Over the past six years, our ultimate goal has been to create an unprecedented level of financial transparency and technology that will significantly improve processes in an effort to enhance our public services,” said DeSoto City Manager Tarron Richardson, Ph.D. “I am extremely proud of the hard work, due diligence and dedication of our IT Department for continuously pursuing the latest and greatest innovations in technology which enabled our City to achieve this prestigious award. “

In addition to its commitment to transparency, DeSoto has taken the time and exerted the effort to provide many digital services online. One of the most innovative ways this has been realized is through its municipal e-court system. Since July, all citations issued to residents were accompanied by a QR code, which led the users to a virtual courtroom



City Calendar

December

1 KDB Mtg. Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm
1 Library Board Mtg. Library - 7 pm
1 Friends of the Library Mtg. - 6 pm
1 Historical Foundation Mtg. 6 pm
5 Arts Commission Mtg. - Civic Ctr. 6pm
5 Park Board Mtg.- Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm
6 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
13 Planning & Zoning Mtg. -City Hall -7 pm
19 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - 9 am
20 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
23 City facilities closed - Christmas Holiday
25 City facilities closed - Christmas Holiday
27 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - canceled

January

2 Park Board Mtg. - canceled
2 City facilities closed New Year's Holiday
3 City Council Mtg. - canceled
5 Library Board Mtg. Library - 7 pm
5 KDB Mtg. Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm
5 Historical Foundation Mtg. 6 pm
9 Arts Commission Mtg. - Civic Ctr. 6 pm
10 Planning & Zoning Mtg.- City Hall -7 pm
16 MLK Holiday - city facilities closed
17 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
24 Planning & Zoning Mtg. City Hall 7 pm
27 Free Concert in Civic Ctr.- 6-9 pm
30 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - 9 am

23rd Annual Daddy Daughter Dance - Feb. 4th

The Annual Daddy and Daughter Dance is a memorable evening of dancing and elegance. This formal affair is a sophisticated and stylish night where Dads make Daughter's dreams come true. It takes place on Saturday, February 4, 2017 from 7 to 9 pm at the DeSoto Civic Center, 211 E. Pleasant Run Road. Regular Admission is \$30 per couple and \$15 for each additional daughter. Reserved seating in a special area is available for \$50 per couple and \$25 for each additional daughter. Tickets go on sale January 5, 2017 and must be purchased in advance at the DeSoto Recreation Center. Tickets will not be sold at the door. For more information call 972.230.9651.

A Message from the Environmental Health Department

Before you start a home-based food business in DeSoto, you need to consider some basic legal issues. For example, you must know which foods you are allowed to prepare in your home kitchen, choose a business structure, understand how your business is regulated, learn about food safety, and obtain insurance.

Allowed Foods

The Cottage Food Law allows you to prepare foods that are not potentially hazardous. These foods include but are not limited to; baked goods, candies, canned jams and jellies, fruit pies, cereals, dried herbs and cucumber pickles. A complete list can be found at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/foodestablishments/cottagefood/faq.aspx>

Foods Not Allowed

Any prepared foods with meat or fish products (beef, pork, chicken, fish and shrimp), prepared salads, vegetable dishes, dairy products (custards, meringues, cheesecakes) are not allowed.

Food Safety

To operate a home-based food business in Texas, you must complete a food safety training course and obtain a food handler card <http://www.desototexas.gov/714/Food-Handler-Training>. In addition, the food you sell must be packaged in a way that prevents contamination (there are exceptions for large items like wedding cakes) and must be properly labeled. Your labels must include:

- the name and address of your cottage food business
- the common or usual name of the product

- a list of any major food allergens contained in the product
- a statement that the food is made in a home kitchen and is not inspected by the Department of State Health Services or a local health department.

To learn more about labeling requirements, go to <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/foodestablishments/cottagefood/faq.aspx>

Permits and Regulations

You do not need a permit from the local health department to start a home-based food business in Texas. In fact, the health department is prohibited from interfering with your cottage food business unless a customer files a complaint. To run a cottage food business, you must follow the guidelines of the state cottage food law and DeSoto Zoning Ordinance, which allows you to sell food only from the following locations:

- by direct delivery to customers
- at a farmer's market or farm stand, or
- at a municipal, county, or nonprofit fair.

You are not allowed to sell at privately sponsored events such as craft fairs or flea markets, nor are you allowed to sell wholesale, through the Internet, or by mail. Also, sales from home that generate motor vehicle traffic are a violation of DeSoto's Zoning Ordinance. All violations are punishable by fine not to exceed \$2,000. Citations can and will be issued to violators by the City of DeSoto Health Department. If you have any questions, please call 972.223.9606.

City of DeSoto Will Hold a Regular Municipal Election on May 6, 2017

The City of DeSoto will hold a Regular Election on Saturday, May 6, 2017. The following places will be voted on in this election:

- Councilmember Place 2
- Councilmember Place 4

DeSoto residents who are interested in filing for one of these city council seats must live within the bounds of the district to be eligible. However, all candidates are elected at large.

Candidate Filing Information Packets can be requested by sending an email to the City Secretary at kmorris@desototexas.gov. Please include your name, address, email



address and contact phone number. Packets can also be picked up in the City Secretary's office during regular business hours beginning January 3, 2017.

Filing for a place on the ballot will take place from January 18, 2017 through February 17, 2017 between the hours of 9 am and 12 noon and from 1 pm to 4 pm in the City Secretary's office. On February 17, 2017, the office will close promptly at 5 pm and no filing will be accepted after that time.

Please visit the City of DeSoto website at www.desototexas.gov for updates on the municipal election.

Important Information on Safe Disposal of Sharps (Syringes)

Putting sharps and sharps containers in the trash is not permitted in DeSoto. To avoid putting sanitation workers and others at risk, dispose of these items in an appropriate manner as specified in this article.

Consider a **mail-back program**. Special sharps containers can be sent through the mail for disposal; the shipping cost is included in their price. Note that buying in bulk gets you a steep discount. Directions for returning the sharps-filled container are included with the purchase. For additional disposal methods, check with your **pharmacist**, or **doctor** about drop-off locations. Also inquire about whether pickup services for home medical waste disposal are available in your area.

Sharps Don'ts

Following these nine rules will help keep sanitation workers, children, yourself, and others safe from needle sticks.

- **Don't** throw loose sharps in the trash.
- **Don't** put sharps in recycling bins.
- **Don't** keep sharps containers where children can reach them.
- **Don't** flush sharps down the toilet.
- **Don't** use glass bottles, plastic water bottles, milk jugs or soda cans as do-it-yourself sharps containers.
- **Don't** fill sharps containers past the fill line or two-thirds full.
- **Don't** wait. Put your sharps into the container immediately after use.
- **Don't** bend or break needles.
- **Don't** recap others' needles; if you don't have a sharps container, you may want to carefully recap your own needles.

For more information on discarding sharps, please contact DeSoto's Environmental Health Specialist, Jimmy Stephens at 972.230.9606.

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for arraignments through a municipal app. Throughout the year, the City's tech administration has focused on mobile adoption and optimization. DeSoto offers three other apps: one for City services, another run by the police department, and a third that allows for easy submission of requests for service.

"I am ecstatic, but not surprised, that our IT Team has been named among the country's Top Digital Cities in our population category by The Center for Digital Government," said DeSoto Mayor Curtistene McCowan. "I commend our IT Team on its exemplary efforts to utilize metrics to analyze and evaluate DeSoto's initiatives designed to improve the quality of life for our citizens. Congratulations on behalf of the City Council and the residents of our All America-City!"

Holiday Trash Schedule & Live Christmas Tree Recycling

Christmas Day and New Year's Day fall on Sunday this year. As a result, there will be no interruption in trash service. The City's solid waste contractor, Republic Waste, will be collecting live Christmas trees for recycling on Wednesday, December 28th and Wednesday, January 4th. Place your tree on the curb in front of your home for recycling. Trees placed in the alley will go to the landfill. Be sure to remove all decorations and lights for recycling. Trees with flocking or artificial trees cannot be recycled. Place them with your regular trash for pick up. If you have any questions regarding your trash service or tree pickup, please call the City of DeSoto Action Center at 972.230.9600.

BACK TO ART Friday, January 27th 6 to 9 pm

The DeSoto Arts Commission presents *Back To Art*, a free event featuring information on programs offered by our 2017 grant partners; DeSoto Art League, NIA Kids, Concerned DeSoto Citizens, Texas Winds Musical Outreach, the DeSoto 4Seasons Music Series, and Dallas Area Writers Group as well as a preview of what we have planned for 2017.

DeSoto Arts Commission will kick-off our Fourth Friday Concert Series with special performances by the Plus One Jazz Group and vocalist Stephanie Sallie with Linny Nance on keyboards. The public is invited to meet our grant partners, enjoy the free concert, complimentary appetizers, and fellowship with the DeSoto Arts Commission.

Join us:

**Friday, January 27th
6 to 9 pm in the
DeSoto Civic Center
Blue Bonnet Rooms,
211 E. Pleasant Run Rd.**

Free Event

R.S.V.P if attending to
972.230.9648 by January 25th



At 6 pm enjoy the sounds of the Plus One Jazz Group, a dynamic and intimate ensemble that plays an eclectic mix of standards, originals, and R&B along with jazz remakes of pop, rock, classical, and Broadway tunes.

Their unique sound is influenced by artists as diverse as Dizzy Gillespie, Bill Evans, Stevie Wonder, The Beatles, Norah Jones, Sting, Jamie Cullum and George Michael, and they tailor their performances to fit the unique energy and mood of the audience. There's a little something for everyone in Plus One's sound.

At 7:30 pm vocalist Stephanie Sallie with Linny Nance on keyboards will take the stage. A chameleon of her trade, you may find Sallie serenading an audience with straight ahead jazz standards from the 20's to the 60's. She captures perfectly the sentiments of the old time jazz era with the likes of Billie Holiday, Julie London, and Ella Fitzgerald. Then, on another evening, you may catch a sultry, soulful set where the blues and R&B are calling. There, Stephanie



enchants her following with love ballads and funky soul music from yesterday's classics to today's hits, along with her own original works. She masters tunes of many of the greats such as Gladys Knight, Chaka Kahn, Etta James, and Sade making each song her own work of art. Striking a more pop, rock chord, Sallie covers top 40 favorites of pop, rock, and funky soul. In this unique setting, you'll see her raw talent in rare form as she blows away her fans with a highly energetic, concert style performance covering tunes by artists such as Rihanna, Christina Aguilera, and Usher. Stephanie enjoys expressing her individuality without missing a single beat.

