

February, 2008



# City Lights DeSoto, Texas

*A publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department*



## Council Corner, A Message from Carl Sherman



### Less Past More Future...

If you want to know the future potential of a city, organization, corporation, or individual, one must review and consider its past performance. That said, I believe that DeSoto has tremendous

opportunity to lead into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Our city's past, while exclusive and non-inclusive, has now birth a city that prides itself on seeking more inclusion and diversity at the helm of the city. I believe and know that this change in seeking to make our city inviting for all, is the basis for our maintaining the All-America City standard of living. A standard that must be demanded by the citizens of DeSoto, and not mandated by the city fathers of the past, present or the future! Here's a look at our past, as recorded by the following online Wikipedia:

The area was first settled in 1847, making it one of the oldest communities in North Texas. A post office was established in 1881 and the settlement was named DeSoto in honor of Thomas Hernando DeSoto Stewart, a doctor dedicated to the community. By 1885, DeSoto was home to approximately 120 people, a cotton gin, and a general store. Soon after, the population declined to below 50. In 1930, there were 97 people living in the community and several businesses.

After World War II, DeSoto and surrounding areas began to grow. In order to improve the inadequate water distribution system, residents felt the need to incorporate the town. On February 17, 1949, a petition signed by 42 eligible voters was presented to the Dallas County judge requesting an election for incorporation. The vote took place on March 2. Of the 52 people who cast ballots, 50 voted in favor of incorporation and 2 were opposed. On March 3, 1949, the results were entered into the records of the Dallas County Commissioners Court, thereby creating the City of DeSoto. The new city was less than one square mile in size. On March 15, Wayne A. Chowning was elected mayor along with five aldermen. The first city council meeting was held two days later.

The first census conducted after DeSoto's

incorporation occurred in 1950. There were 298 people and eight businesses in the city. Following a series of annexations in 1953, the city covered approximately 15 square miles. By 1960, the population had grown to 1,969. In 1970, DeSoto was home to 6,617 people and seventy-one businesses.

During the 1970s, continued growth brought about improvements to the municipal infrastructure, including road construction, and a new water/sewage system. Industrial, commercial, and residential construction also increased. On October 26, 1974, an election was held to determine the status of Woodland Hills, a small incorporated community located northwest of DeSoto. The result was 221 votes in favor of a merger with DeSoto and 219 opposed. Woodland Hills had a population of 366 at the time of annexation.

The rapid growth that began in the early 1970s was sustained throughout the 1980s. 1980 census figures put the city's population at slightly over 15,000. By 1984, DeSoto had a total of 360 businesses - up from 168 in 1980. The population surpassed 30,000 in 1990. City development progressed in the following years. A primary example of this was the creation of DeSoto's Town Center. Officials converted an abandoned strip center located at one of the city's main intersections into a unique central business district. Since its opening, the Town Center has become an anchor of the community, housing city hall, the public library and chamber of commerce, along with civic and recreation centers. There is also a 180-seat auditorium and outdoor amphitheater.

Throughout the 1990s, DeSoto experienced a significant change in its demographic composition. In the 1990 census, Whites constituted 75.97% of the city's population, but that figure had declined to 48.83% in the 2000 census. By contrast, the African American population grew rapidly. In 2000, African Americans were 45.53% of the population, up from 20.83% in 1990. Hispanics accounted for 4.98% of the population in 1990 and 7.30% in 2000. With approximately 45,500 residents as of 2005, DeSoto is the largest and most diverse city in southwest Dallas County. As of the current census estimate in 2006, there were 47,109 people in the city. This is a 25.1% increase over 2000.

On June 11, 2006, the National Civic League named DeSoto an All-America City. This award is the nation's oldest community recognition program and recognizes communities whose citizens work together to identify and tackle community-wide challenges and achieve uncommon results.

**Less past, more future...**2008 promises to be the

start of some bold new initiatives and developments for the great City of DeSoto! One such example of this new, bold DeSoto is our new landmark monument that soars above the city skyline and touches the blue sky at I-35 and Pleasant Run Road. I believe this tower, that is nearly 70 feet tall and said to be the tallest monument in Texas, represents that bold, new future for DeSoto. I hope that you will join me in working for a bright, new and bold future for our great city. A future that is evidenced by the 4 new premier hotels, all more than 4 stories tall, that are currently under construction. Three of those hotels are located along I-35 and the fourth fronts on Highway 67.



Finally, the crown jewel of our redevelopment will be the uptown feel created by the new Trammell Crow High Street Residential Development in front of Town Center. If the past performance of converting a shopping strip center into a city hall, library and recreational complex was deemed as bold and cutting edge, just think what this new \$25 million plus development will mean to the city's future as it relates to thrusting it to great city status.

That stated, a city's most valuable asset to becoming "great" is its citizens and its greatest liability to becoming a "not so great" city is also its citizens. One demands and expects greatness and the other is satisfied with the success of yesterday. You have spoken and your words must be supported by the actions and standards established by our city council and mayor in order for the city's future to be first class.

Sincerely,

**Carl O. Sherman, Sr.**  
**City Council Place 6**

## Your Opinion Is Important To Us, Please Join Us for a Town Hall Meeting March 3rd

Each year, the City of DeSoto begins the planning process for the city's budget and Capital Improvement Program by asking our citizens for input on how they would like to see their tax dollars spent. This citizen input is gathered in several different ways.

In February, you will receive a post card in the mail that asks for suggestions on projects that you want to see considered for the FY 08-09 operating budget and the city's five-year Capital Improvement Program. We are looking for input on both immediate needs and long term projects or goals for the city.

This is your opportunity to let us know what projects are important to you. For example, if you would like to see more flowers planted in our medians or you feel we need to increase the number of police officers on the street, these are issues that would be addressed in the operating budget.

We are also looking for input on the projects that you would like to see included in the five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). In order to qualify for the CIP, a project must have a value of at least \$100,000 and a useful life of five years or more. For example, if you would like to see the city build an additional Recreation Center or sidewalks near your neighborhood, these are the types of projects that would be considered for the Capital Improvement Program.

Another way that citizens can be a part of the process is by attending a Town Hall Meeting on Monday, March 3, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at DeSoto City Hall. Planning for the budget and the Capital Improvement Program will be the topics of discussion for this meeting but it is also an opportunity for citizens to ask questions on any subject relating to municipal government.

We need to hear from you to ensure that your city government is doing the things you want done. We encourage you to take an opportunity to let us know what you think by taking a few minutes to fill out the postage paid, postcard and dropping it back in the mail to us and/or by attending the Town Hall Meeting. We will take all of your suggestions into consideration as we plan our city's future. For more information, please call the Action Center at 972.230.9600.

## February

- 4 Park Development Corp. Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 5 City Council Meeting - cancelled
- 7 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 7 Library Advisory Board Mtg. - 7 p.m. - Library
- 9 Daddy & Daughter Valentine Dance - 6 p.m. Civic Center
- 12 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 12 Juneteenth Planning Meeting—6:30 p.m.—Civic Center
- 17 CDC Gospel Concert - 4 p.m. - Corner Theatre
- 18 Arts Commission Meeting - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 19 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 25 DeSoto Economic Development Corp. Mtg. - noon - City Hall
- 26 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg.

## March

- 3 Town Hall Meeting - 6 p.m. City Hall
- 3 Park Development Corp. Meeting 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 4 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. City Hall
- 6 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 6 Library Advisory Board Mtg. - 7 p.m. - Library
- 10 Arts Commission Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 11 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 13 Board & Commission Banquet
- 18 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 20 Civic Academy Begins
- 22 Easter Egg Hunt - Noon Zeiger Park
- 24 DeSoto Economic Development Corp. Mtg. - noon - City Hall
- 25 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall

## Important Information Regarding our Upcoming City Election

The DeSoto General Election is scheduled for Saturday, May 10, 2008. If you are interested in running for a place on the City Council, please contact the Office of the City Secretary to request a City Council Candidate Guide, which contains all the information needed to file. The first day for candidate filing is Monday, February 11, 2008 at 8:00 a.m. Filing continues during normal business hours until Monday, March 10, 2008 at 5:00 p.m.

The DeSoto City Charter mandates a geographical district plan that requires City Council candidates live within the boundaries of the district they represent for one year prior to election day and during their entire term, if elected. Candidates for the position of Mayor may live anywhere in the City. Mayor and Councilmembers are elected "at large" by voters of the entire city. **Available council positions for the May 10th ballot are Place 2 and Place 4.**

In order to vote in the election, you must be a registered voter in the City of DeSoto. Voter registration applications are available at City Hall and the deadline to register is April 10, 2008. Due to the construction at Town Center, all voting for the ***continued on page 3***

## Sign-up Now For The Next Session of the DeSoto Civic Academy Beginning March 20th

The DeSoto Civic Academy is looking for participants. This program is designed to give citizens a behind-the-scenes look at the City of DeSoto. There are 11 weekly sessions each hosted by a different city department or group. Each class is designed to allow participants to experience hands-on how our city operates.

The first session is a Hollywood-style Opening Night hosted by the staff of the City Manager's office who serve a sumptuous dinner prepared by Debby Baugh, the City Manager's wife. They introduce participants to their "cast of characters" (the staff in Administration) and their duties. Next, the class goes behind-the-scenes at the Police Department to tour the facilities including the jail. They operate a radar gun, and walk through shoot/don't shoot scenarios.



Development Services hosts the class at the Service Center and shows them the equipment used by our Street Department. The class even gets the opportunity to drive the street sweeper and other equipment. There's a tour of the city's Pump Station and class members see what it takes to make it possible for us to have water every time we turn on a faucet. DeSoto Fire Rescue hosts the class at Central Fire Station and serves some of their famous Fire House Burgers as they discuss all aspects of fire protection and emergency medical services. Staff from Information Technology, the

Library, and Community Relations take class members on a scavenger hunt using the City's website. Human Resources, Planning & Zoning and Building Inspections also make presentations.

The Finance Department guides the class through the world of municipal accounting and budgeting by giving class members a fictional amount of money to run their imaginary city. The DeSoto Economic Development Corporation discusses how they attract commercial development to our city and Parks & Leisure Services discusses the city's beautification program and the wide spectrum of recreation opportunities available to DeSoto residents. The class also goes behind the scenes at Southwest Regional Communications, the 911 emergency dispatch center for DeSoto, Duncanville and Cedar Hill. Participants see dispatchers work a 911 call from start to finish. They can also get extra credit for taking "ride-alongs" with both our Police and Fire Departments.

At the final class, the City Secretary's office casts class members in the roll of Mayor, City Councilmembers, City Staff and citizens and walks them through a "mock" city council meeting. The meeting is accurately scripted to the smallest detail, however, the subject matter is so ludicrous that your sides will ache from laughter.

The next Civic Academy will begin March 20,



2008 and meets every Thursday for eleven weeks. There is no charge for participation and dinner is served at each session. If you would like to be a part of the next class, please call Tracie Hlavinka at 972 230-9689 to request an application or for more information.

### ***City Election.....continued from page 2***

May 10th election will take place at DeSoto East Middle School. Voting equipment will be located in a room in the Information Technology wing located at the rear of the campus off of North Parks Drive. Signs will be posted to assist with directions.

Early voting begins April 28th and continues through May 6th. Voting times for early voting and Election Day can be found by visiting the Dallas county Elections department website at [www.dalcoelections.org](http://www.dalcoelections.org). You may also vote early at any Dallas County early voting polling location (these can also be found on the Dallas county Elections Department web site). You will be asked to show your Voter Registration Card or another form of picture identification that indicates your current address. Taking advantage of the early voting option saves time and allows you to avoid the long lines on Election Day.

For more information on the City Election, please call DeSoto City Secretary, Anell Shipman at 972.230.9646.

## Upcoming Special Events:

**Feb. 9** - Daddy/Daughter Dance  
**Feb. 16** - Black History Month  
 Celebration at DeSoto Wal-Mart - noon  
**Mar. 22** - Easter Egg Hunt - Zeiger Park  
 noon, age groups 3 & under, 4-7, 8-10  
**Apr. 5** - Kick-off for Annual Clean-up  
 (972.230.9689)  
**Apr. 26** - DeSoto Star Search  
 (972.230.9648)  
**May 3** - Mother/Son Black & White Ball  
**June 14** - BSW Juneteenth Celebration -  
 Moseley Park 4 to 10 pm  
**July 4th** - Combined Fireworks Show -  
 in Lancaster  
**Aug. 24th** - Kid's Fishing Day - 9 to  
 noon - Briarwood Park  
**Sept. 13th** - Viva DeSoto  
**Oct. 4th** - Toad Holler Creekfest  
**Dec. 6th** - HomeTown Holiday  
 Christmas Activities

For more information on any of the above activities, please call Carolyn Campbell, special events coordinator for the City of DeSoto, or check out the Special Events tab on the city's website at [www.ci.desoto.tx.us](http://www.ci.desoto.tx.us).

## Parking at Town Center

Site preparation is underway and construction will soon begin on the Town Center Project, a public/private partnership between the City of DeSoto and developer, Trammell Crow's High Street Residential Division. As a result, the west parking lot between the existing Town Center facilities and Hampton Road will not be accessible to the public along with the front entrances to the Corner Theatre, the Recreation Center, Civic Center and Library.

In anticipation, the city constructed a new parking lot, accessible from Pleasant Run Road on the east side of City Hall. This will serve as the main parking area for the entire complex during construction. Parking is still available on the south side of City Hall and the west entrance of City Hall will still be accessible during construction. Handicap parking is available next to the building and the east City Hall doors provide handicap access to the offices in City Hall. Inside new signage has been added to direct you easily through the building.

If you are visiting the Recreation Center, Corner Theatre, Civic Center or Library, please use the east entrance to the Recreation Center from the east parking lot. This entrance is located near the racquet ball courts and is also ADA accessible. Once inside, you only need look up and follow the new signage to your destination. The Library's existing book return will also not be usable during construction. A shiny new book drop has been installed on the north side of the Library facing Ten Mile Creek. To reach the new book drop enter the pavestone drive off of Pleasant Run Road and follow it around the building exiting on the new asphalt drive added on northbound Hampton Road.

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](http://www.ci.desoto.tx.us). The effects of the construction on City Hall and the other municipal facilities is also the subject of a Focus On DeSoto Today program currently running on Time Warner Cable Channel 16 and available for viewing on the city's website.

The City of DeSoto Arts Commission  
is proud to present the

## 6th Annual DeSoto STAR SEARCH!

April 26, 2008 7:30 p.m.

DeSoto Corner Theatre



Got Talent?? Do you sing, dance or tell jokes?? Here's your chance to perform and compete for cash prizes. Take part in DeSoto's very own, just for fun Star Search. Auditions for kids aged 8-13, teens aged 14 to 18, adults & seniors will be held on April 12th. Audition fee \$5 per act. Call 972 230-9648 to reserve an audition time or more information.


**Register Now**  
 DeSoto Girls Fastpitch Softball  
 DeSoto Town Center  
 Recreation Center  
**Call 214-356-3472**  
[www.eteamz.com/desotogs](http://www.eteamz.com/desotogs)

## Coming Attractions at:

  
**THE CORNER**  
 Theatre

Staged Readings of *The Meeting and A Woman Called Truth* on Saturday, February 9th at 8 p.m. and Sunday, February 10th at 3 p.m. at the DeSoto Corner Theatre located in DeSoto Town Center at 211 E. Pleasant Run Road. The tickets will be \$10 for both performances and can be purchased at the box office one hour prior to each show.

**Concerned DeSoto Citizens 10th Annual Gospel Concert on Sunday, February 17th 4 p.m.** See the DeSoto Dream Girls, the DHS Gospel Choir and Men's Choir and a special performance by recording artist, Tracy Carter. Tickets are \$10. For more information, call 972.230.4243.

The construction of the Town Center project will eliminate access to the Corner Theatre as well as other facilities at Town Center from the west parking area during 2008. However, the show must go on!!! Parking for Corner Theatre patrons will be in the newly completed east parking lot off Pleasant Run Road. You will enter the facility on the east side of the Recreation Center near the racquet ball courts and follow the signs through the Recreation Center and out to the front entrance of the Corner Theatre.