

## **DESOTO RESPONDS TO HURRICANE IKE**

With the threat of Hurricane Ike looming in the Gulf of Mexico, five DeSoto fire fighter/paramedics were deployed on September 9<sup>th</sup> to assist with the evacuation of Texas coastal cities. Three of the firefighter/medics, Bryan Whitacre, Bryan Parker and Michael Homer were deployed to provide medical care for evacuees.

FEMA requested that we send our mobile command/ communications vehicle which serves as a control center for command operations at disasters or large scale emergencies. This vehicle, which was recently purchased through a Homeland Security Grant, is a fully selfcontained center for communications with six stations complete with Internet connections in the front of the vehicle where personnel can dock their laptops and



Here are the firefighter/paramedics who responded to the call for help. Pictured from left Todd Spencer, Bryan Whitacre, James Judd, Bryan Parker, and Michael.

transmit information as needed. There is a conference table in the back of the vehicle that can be used for planning sessions. Televisions monitor all news channels and the vehicle is equipped with a roof mounted video camera that can be used to send live pictures from the scene. The vehicle also provides interoperable communications capabilities among the various jurisdictions

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represented at an emergency. Fire Fighter/medics Todd Spencer and James Judd were assigned to staff the DeSoto's command/communications vehicle.

The fire fighters and the command/communications vehicle reported to San

Antonio to stage and await assignment. Firefighter/medics Whitacre, Parker and Homer were assigned to an evacuation bus that traveled to Beeville and Beaumont before returning to San Antonio. Spencer and Judd waited out the arrival of Hurricane Ike in San Antonio and received orders to report to Galveston on Saturday after the hurricane had cleared the area.



Late Saturday afternoon, with the conclusion of evacuation operations, Whitacre, Parker and Homer were demobilized and returned to DeSoto. As of Monday morning Spencer and Judd along with the communications command vehicle are in Galveston and have been assigned to assist the Forestry Service as rescue and recovery operations continue.

DeSoto Fire Rescue's Communications/Command vehicle was purchased with a homeland security grant and is one of four vehicles acquired by area fire departments as a regional effort under the Ellis Dallas Unified Cooperative Team. The communications/command vehicle has been used frequently by area police and fire departments, but this is the first time it has been called for service as a state resource.



## Learn How To Talk To Your Child's Teacher

"How to Talk to Your Child's Teacher" will be presented at the DeSoto Public Library, on Tuesday, September 23, from 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm in the library's Quiet Reading Room. Dr. John Ringhauser, DeSoto resident and educator with 31 years of experience, will share ideas and strategies on how to talk to your child's teacher and how to have a positive conference. For children to be truly successful in school, it is important for parents and teachers to communicate regularly. One such form is parent conferences, which are just around the corner.

This free workshop is open to everyone, whether your child is in public or private school. Seating is limited, so register early by calling 972.230.9661 by September 19. The library is located at 211 E. Pleasant Run Road in DeSoto's Town Center. Park behind City Hall and come to the library through the Recreation Center and the Civic Center.

## The DeSoto Recreation Center Will Close for Cleaning

DeSoto Recreation Center will be closed for a thorough cleaning and routine maintenance on September 22nd and 23rd. The library will remain open and can be accessed through the Recreation Center. The Recreation Center will re-open for normal business on September 24th at 5 a.m. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and thank you for your cooperation as we move forward to serve our citizens.



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## AFRICAN AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER TO OPEN NEW SEASON

The African-American Repertory Theater (AART) presents three award winning plays featuring stellar casts during its 2009 season. All performances will be held at the **DeSoto Corner Theater**, **DeSoto Town Center**, **211 E. Pleasant Run Road in DeSoto**.

The season will open in September with "A Soldier's Story", winner of the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and a stellar cast featuring Vince McGill.

The play is set in a Louisiana camp in 1944 where Captain Taylor, the white commander officer has a problem. He commands a Black company whose sergeant has been murdered and he's concerned the murderer may be a white officer or local Klansman. The New York Times said this play is "one of the contemporary American Theatre's most forceful and original voices" when it was first released nearly 30 years ago.

A preview of "**Soldier's Story**" will be held on Thursday, September 4, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. The play opens Friday, September 5, 2008 and closes on Sunday, September 28. A special performance will be held on Thursday, September 11 in honor of our military, firemen and police officers.

"Neat" by modern day storyteller, Charlayne Woodard, is the second compelling AART production. It is a magnificent story about the author's real-life remembrances of her brain-damaged Aunt Neat and the profound change the Aunt brings to her life. On a bare stage, Aunt Neat shows her enormous love, energy, simplicity and clarity and teaches the young Charlayne what it is to cherish life. "Neat" is the story of an urban African American girl bursting into adulthood while experiencing first love and embracing both Black pride and feminism. Neat is an inspiration for all families.

The preview of "**Neat"** will be held on Thursday, October 30, 2008. The play opens Saturday, November 1, 2008 and closes Sunday, November 23, 2008.

For tickets or more information check out their website at <a href="www.aarttheater.com">www.aarttheater.com</a> or call 972.572.0998.