

March, 2007



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City Lights DeSoto, Texas



A publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department

The 2007 Annual Clean-Up Week will kick-off on Saturday, April 14th and run through Friday, April 20th. This event is in conjunction with the "Don't Mess With Texas Trash Off" which is sponsored by the Texas Department of Transportation and Keep Texas Beautiful. We hope you will join us in support of keeping our communities clean and beautiful places to live and work!!!

Annual Clean-Up Week Newsletter



Dumpsters will be available for use by DeSoto residents during Annual Clean-up week. Proof of DeSoto residency such as a driver's license or utility bill will be required in order to use the dumpsters.

Dumpsters Will Be Available During the 11th Annual City-Wide Clean-Up!!!

Clean out your garage, pick up your yard and bring your trash to the dumpsters located just south of DeSoto West Junior High on the east side of Westmoreland Road. Hazardous materials including paint, oil, chemicals, batteries and tires will not be allowed in the dumpsters. Tires can be recycled for a fee of \$2 each. City employees will be on hand to assist residents with placing items into the dumpsters and will ensure that no illegal dumping of waste or hazardous materials occurs. The dumpsters are provided for DeSoto residents only and proof of residency is required. Please be prepared to present a driver's license or utility bill with a DeSoto address as you enter the dump site.

Dumpsters will be available on Westmoreland at Spinner for the use of DeSoto residents only, on Saturday, April 14th, 9: a.m. to 7 p.m., Sunday, April 15th from 1 to 5 p.m. and Monday April 16th through Friday, April 20th, from 3 to 7 p.m.

DeSoto Recreation Center

Spring is almost here and if you're ready to get in shape, look no further than the DeSoto Recreation Center.

DeSoto residents or employees of DeSoto

businesses can purchase a Recreation Pass for \$10 per year (seniors 55 & older are \$5) which entitles you to use the basketball gyms, the indoor jogging/walking track and game area. For an additional \$20 per month, you can use the state-of-the-art Fitness Center equipped with universal weight machines, free weights, recumbent and stationary bikes, and ellipticals equipped with personal TVs. The center also offers fitness classes



including Jazzercise, yoga, a seniors exercise class, quick cardio and body sculpting and a spin class.

DeSoto Recreation Center hours are Monday through Thursday 5 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., Fridays 5 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturdays 6:45 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Sundays 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, please call 972 230-9655.

Avoid Identity Theft by Shredding Your Personal Documents During Annual Clean-up

Identity theft is a serious problem in today's society. One way to protect yourself is to make sure that would-be identity thieves aren't gaining access to your personal information through junk mail or other documents you have placed in the trash. The best way to assure this doesn't happen is to shred your junk mail and other personal documents before discarding.

If you don't have access to a paper shredder, bring the things

you wish to shred to the DeSoto Service Center located at 809 W. Spinner Road on Saturday, April 14th. There will be a mobile document shredding unit on-site to shred your documents at no cost. Document shredding is a new addition to DeSoto's Annual Clean-up this year. The unit will be available at the Service Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on April 14th. For more information, please call 972 230-9689.

Adopt-A-Street Program

The City of DeSoto Adopt-a-Street Program is a joint effort between local government and residents to keep our city clean and beautiful.

Residents have the opportunity to show their pride and commitment to our community by volunteering their time to keep an adopted area litter-free.

We encourage individuals, civic organizations, church groups, businesses and homeowners' associations to join us in spreading the message that we want to live in a clean community by adopting a street.



A sign similar to this one will be installed on your adopted street.

What do the volunteers get in return? Upon agreement to keep a specified area in DeSoto free of trash for 1 year, the City of DeSoto will install a street sign in that area with the name of the individual or group, recognizing the contribution of time and energy spent in keeping that area clean. Volunteers are also recognized at a annual banquet held in their honor.

For more information on this program or to obtain an application, please contact Tracie Hlavinka at 972 230-9689.

CITY CALENDAR March

- 1 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 5 Park Development Corp. Meeting - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 6 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 8 Board & Commission Banquet - 6:30 p.m. - Civic Center
- 12 Last day to file for Mayor or Council seat
- 13 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 15 Civic Academy Begins
- 20 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 21 Public Meeting Needs Assessment for Tri-City Animal Shelter - 7p.m. - City Hall
- 23 BSW Reading, Writing & Rhythm Fest - DeSoto Town Center
- 24 BSW Reading, Writing & Rhythm Fest - DeSoto Town Center
- 26 DEDC Board Meeting—City Hall noon
- 27 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. City Hall
- 27 Council Budget Workshop - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall

April

- 2 Park Development Corp. Meeting - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 3 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 5 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 7 Easter Egg Hunt - 11am to 1pm - Town Center
- 7 Third Coast Prod. Jazz Concert 8:00 p.m. - Civic Center
- 10 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 14 Auditions for DeSoto Star Search 9 to 4pm Corner Theatre (reservation required)
- 14 Annual Clean-up Kick-Off
- 17 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 23 DEDC Board Meeting - noon - City Hall
- 27 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg.
- 28 HOA Involvement Workshop—9 a.m. - City Hall
- 28 DeSoto Star Search Show—7:30 p.m. - Corner Theatre - tickets \$10 at door

What Does the City's Trash Service Pick Up???

As a resident of DeSoto, you already pay for the following trash disposal services each month with your utility bill:

- **Twice a week Household Garbage Pick-up** Residences east of Hampton Road have Monday/Thursday service and those west of Hampton Road have Tuesday/Friday pick-up of regular household garbage. It must be placed out for pick-up in the alley or front curb (where applicable) by 7:00 a.m. on the day of pick-up and the garbage must be placed in a plastic refuse bag.
- **Once a Week Recycling Pick-up** Each residence has recycling pick-up every Wednesday that includes plastic, glass, cardboard, paper of all kinds and junk mail.
- **Once a Week Bulky Item Pick-up** Items collected include old furniture, mattresses, hot water heaters, and appliances. Hazardous materials such as paint, pesticides, and tires will not be collected. Bulky items are collected on the second household garbage day for each residence. Items should be placed with your regular trash for pick-up. Construction materials are not accepted.
- **Once a Week Brush Pick-up** Place loose brush and tree limbs or old fencing/lumber out IN FRONT of your residence by the curb for pick-up. A truck will automatically come by within seven days to remove the brush.

If you have any additional questions regarding your trash pick-up service, please contact the City of DeSoto Action Center at (972) 274-CITY.

Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday,
April 7, 2007
11a.m. - 1p.m.



Egg Hunt at noon
DeSoto Town Center

Join the Easter Bunny and the DeSoto PALS staff for our annual Easter Egg Hunt. Games, popcorn, face painting 11-1pm. Free admission. For more information call 972 230-9650. In case of rain, all activities will move indoors to the Recreation Center.

Don't Mess with Texas Trash Off *DESOTO STYLE* Saturday, April 14, 2007

**9:30 a.m. Trash Pick Up Begins -
Meet at one of the locations below**
11:30 p.m. Free Hot Dog Lunch for all participants

City of DeSoto and Keep DeSoto Beautiful will kick-off the 2007 Annual Clean-Up Week activities by participating in the **Don't Mess with Texas Trash Off** on Saturday, April 14th, and we need your help to get DeSoto looking great and litter-free. We've identified some areas in need of a spring cleaning and would like to ask you and your neighbors to set aside a couple of hours that morning to help clean the following locations:

- 1) Danieldale Rd. (Westmoreland Rd. to Bolton Boone Rd.)
- 2) Westmoreland Rd. (south of Pleasant Run and north of Wintergreen)
- 3) Parkerville Rd.
- 4) Elerson Rd.
- 5) Uhl Rd.
- 6) Polk Street (Wintergreen to Parkerville)

A City staff member will be on hand at each location to provide trash bags and water for volunteers and to collect the filled bags. It is our goal to clean as many areas around our community as possible and the above sites are just a suggestion. If there is an area near your neighborhood that needs some attention, please call 972 230-9689 and let us know ahead of time. We would like to provide you with trash bags and will make arrangements to come by and pick up the bags after they have been filled.

After you've spent the morning making DeSoto look good, join us at Town Center for a free hot dog lunch at 11:30 a.m. We hope to see you there!!! For more information, please call the Action Center at 972 274-CITY or Tracie Hlavinka at 972 230-9689.

**Annual
Clean-Up Proud
Sponsors:**



Your Input is Needed on the Future of the Tri-City Animal Shelter

The Tri-City Animal Shelter is jointly owned and managed by the Cities of Cedar Hill, Duncanville and DeSoto. The City of Cedar Hill on behalf of its partner cities, has hired Quorum Architects to conduct a needs assessment for the Tri-City Animal Shelter. This needs assessment will determine current needs, expansion possibilities for the facility and cost.

The first step in the process is to seek input from the public relative to the shelter by holding public meetings in all three cities. The City of DeSoto will host a meeting to gather public input on the Tri-City Animal Shelter in the City Council Chambers at DeSoto City Hall on Wednesday, March 21, 2007 at 7 p.m. DeSoto City Hall is located in Town Center at 211 E. Pleasant Run Road.

Code Enforcement Encourages You to be Their Eyes & Ears

DeSoto's Code Enforcement Department has offered a program for several years called Eyes & Ears which enlists the help of homeowners association members by asking them to report code violations such as high grass or junk cars in their neighborhood. That program was expanded last year allow HOA members an even greater opportunity to make a difference in their neighborhoods. In addition to reporting high grass, the Eyes & Ears Program was expanded to empower registered Homeowners Associations to mow high grass and weeds at vacant homes in their neighborhood.

As we move into spring, neighborhoods may start to experience problems with high weeds. The Expanded Eyes & Ears program allows HOAs to be proactive in resolving the problem by following these procedures. When a high grass complaint at a vacant house is reported, a Code Enforcement Officer verifies that a violation exists and confirms with the City's Water Department that the property is vacant. A high grass sign is placed in the yard of the vacant property and digital photos are taken of the property for documentation purposes including the date and time of the photo. The property owner is then notified and has seven (7) days to mow the property. On the eighth day, the Code Enforcement Officer will re-inspect the property and if it has not been mowed, the neighborhood's Homeowners Association is notified and members of the HOA can mow the property.

Before this program was instituted, mowing contractors were hired to mow the vacant property extending the time before the property was mowed. Now HOA members can mow the property as soon as they are notified by Code Enforcement giving them some control over the appearance of their neighborhood. This gets the mowing done more quickly in most cases. Property owners are billed for the mowing and the HOA is paid \$50 for each yard mowed under this program.

HOA members in the Wildwood neighborhood recently took that initiative one step further. When faced with a home going through foreclosure in their neighborhood which had been vandalized with graffiti and had a damaged fence, they didn't wait for the mortgage company to address the problems. As Eyes & Ears Program participants, Wayne Valentine and Reginald Jones along with other Wildwood residents, painted over the graffiti and repaired the downed fence.

"The best way to keep your neighborhood looking clean and free of eyesores is to partner with the City's Code Enforcement Department and participate in the Eyes & Ears Program," according to Wayne Valentine, President of the Wildwood HOA. "I encourage you to be involved and monitor what is going on in your neighborhood by reporting high grass, graffiti, junk cars and other problems."

In order to participate in the Eyes & Ears Program, the Homeowners Association must be registered with the City of DeSoto Community Initiatives Manager. For more information or to participate in this program, please call the City of DeSoto Action Center at 972 274-CITY.

**Toad Holler Creekfest is Back.....
Saturday June 2nd!!**



The City of DeSoto invites you to step back in time to the turn of the century and the days of the old Toad Holler School (named for all the toads and frogs that hopped through the hollow where it was built).

Toad Holler Creekfest, a full day of fun, food, and family entertainment, is back again this year and will be held on June 2, 2007. There is no admission charge and the festival will take place at DeSoto Town Center utilizing the outdoor amphitheater and park on the banks of Ten Mile Creek.

If you would like more information about vendor opportunities or participation in Toad Holler Creekfest, please call the City of DeSoto Parks & Leisure Services Department at 972 230-9651.

Best Southwest Reading, Writing & Rhythm Festival - March 23 & 24

It's the time of year to celebrate reading, writing and rhythm as the Best Southwest Reading, Writing and Rhythm Festival-2007 (formerly Best Southwest Bookfest) returns to Southwest Dallas County. The Fourth Annual Festival will take place on March 23 & 24, 2007 at the DeSoto Town Center and is again presented by the libraries of Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Duncanville, Lancaster and UNT Dallas.

The Reading, Writing & Rhythm Festival kicks off at 9:00 am on Friday, March 23rd in the DeSoto Civic Center. Writer's workshops are scheduled throughout the day and there is a VIP Reception at 7:00 p.m. The Reception will feature music and entertainment by W. C. Jameson and Laurie Wagner Buyer. Tickets for the Friday evening reception are \$35 and are available at any of the participating libraries.

On Saturday, March 24th, DeSoto Town Center will come alive with:

- Jazz Band Performances & Shakespeare in Park on the Amphitheater Stage.
- The Literary Lion and strolling storybook characters will entertain the children.
- A symphony concert for children on the Outdoor Amphitheater Stage.
- Matinees, coffee house poetry readings and performances in the Corner Theatre
- A harpist performing in the Civic Center.
- Art displays in DeSoto City Hall Atrium
- Vendor booths representing civic, state, national and educational organizations, and colleges. Barnes & Nobel-Cedar Hill will have books for sale and authors will be available for autographs

There will also be lots of food and family fun. The highlight of the festival will include the presence of more than 20 authors and publishing industry professionals presenting workshops and informational sessions from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm in the DeSoto Civic Center. Admission is free for the Saturday events.

The Reading, Writing and Rhythm Festival is a cooperative effort aimed at bringing authors and other literary events to Southwest Dallas County. Books by the featured authors will be for sale at the Festival. For more information, please call 972-230-9658.

The City of DeSoto Arts Commission

is proud to present the

5th Annual

DeSoto STAR SEARCH!

April 28, 2007 7:30 p.m.

DeSoto Corner Theatre



Do you sing, dance or tell jokes?? Auditions for kids aged 8-13, teens aged 14 to 18, adults & seniors will be held on April 14th. Audition fee \$5 per act. Call 972 230-9648 to reserve an audition time or more information.



BSW Juneteenth Celebration Sponsored by the cities of DeSoto,

Lancaster, Duncanville & Cedar Hill

Sat. June 16, 2007 At Valley Ridge Park 2850 Park Ridge Dr.

For info call the host, City of Cedar Hill at 972 293-5288

Voters Will Consider Amendments to the City Charter at May 12th City Election

The DeSoto City Charter contains a provision requiring that this document be reviewed at least every five (5) years. In compliance with this provision, the DeSoto City Council appointed a 21 member Charter Review Commission in November chaired by former DeSoto Mayor, Richard Rozier. This Commission met several times to review the entire Charter and brought fourth their recommended revisions to the City Council in a joint meeting on January 30, 2007.

Based on the recommendations from the Charter Review Commission, the City Council has called a special election for May 12, 2007 to consider amendments to the Home Rule Charter for the City of DeSoto. Here are the propositions to be considered by voters:

PROPOSITION 1

Shall Article XI, Sections 3, 4, 6, 10 and 11 of the DeSoto Home Rule City Charter regarding franchises and public utilities be amended to comply with state law?

PROPOSITION 2

Shall Article II, Section 2 of the DeSoto Home Rule City Charter be amended to clarify the composition of the Boards and Commissions of the City?

PROPOSITION 3

Shall Article IV, Section 7 of the DeSoto Home Rule City Charter be amended to clarify the number of signatures required on a petition for recall of a City Councilmember?

PROPOSITION 4

Shall Article VIII, Section 1 of the DeSoto Home Rule

City Charter be amended to authorize the expenditure of more funds on a bond project than were approved by the voters upon a vote of 5 of the 7 City Councilmembers after a public hearing with prior notice to the public?

PROPOSITION 5

Shall Article II, Section 1 of the DeSoto Home Rule City Charter be amended to eliminate term limits for the Mayor and City Councilmembers?

In addition to the Charter Election, voters will be asked to cast ballots for candidates for Mayor and City Council Places 3 and 5 during the May 12th City Election. 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 submit your completed application to Dallas County Elections is April 12, 2007.

Early voting for the May 12th election takes place in the DeSoto Library Assembly Hall from April 30th through May 8th. When you come to vote, please remember to bring 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. Check the city's website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us for listings of other early voting locations in Dallas County.

For more information on the City Election, please contact Anell Shipman, DeSoto City Secretary at 972-230-9646.