April, 2010



City Lights DeSoto, Texas



www.ci.desoto.tx.us 972.230.9600

A publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department

Thank you for your patience!!

The record snowfall that hit DeSoto and the Metroplex on February 11th left a record amount of brush debris in it's wake. It was estimated that there was more than 30,000 cubic yards of

wood waste to be collected from DeSoto residences.

City staff and solid waste contractor, Republic Waste (Duncan Disposal) were overwhelmed with the volume and, in early



March, reinforcements were brought in from Florida. Republic split the city into 16 sectors and continued to systematically clear the brush sector by sector with 6 trucks. \$53,000 from the fund balance in the City's Sanitation Fund was used to cover this cost for 5 days. By mid-March it was clear that more help was needed and a total of 9 trucks began working daily to clear the brush from the city. The wood waste was taken to a mulching and chipping facility. \$200,000 was allocated from the City's General Fund to cover the cost of the nine trucks picking up brush for two and one half weeks.



By late March, all 16 sectors were collected and the extra trucks were retired. Republic has started back at the first sectors that were collected and is picking up additional brush that has been

cleared from yards after the initial storm had passed. They will continue through all 16 sectors before resuming their normal brush collection schedule.

"This has been a tough few weeks for DeSoto and I want to personally thank our citizens for their patience and commend Republic for the way they have handled this crisis," said Tracie Hlavinka, Community Initiatives Manager and staff liaison for Republic Waste.

City Receives Stimulus Funds

Recently, the City of DeSoto was approved to receive \$187,000 in federal stimulus funds from the Energy Department which will be used to install solar panels on the roof of the city facilities at Town Center. With the installation of these solar panels, the city hopes to generate about 30kW or 20% of the electricity needed to power City Hall, the Recreation Center, Civic Center, Corner Theatre and Library.

A feasibility study was conducted by Blue Wave Strategies/Clean Energy Solutions which noted that the roof on Town Center is large, unobstructed and flat and receives a more than ample amount of sunlight. It was determined that it would easily accommodate a roof top solar panel system that

would produce the desired savings in electric costs.

In January, the City Council instructed city staff to move forward on this project and bids are currently being reviewed for the purchase of the solar panels. Installation is scheduled for summer, 2010.





DeSoto C.E.R.T. Volunteers!!! Mark your calendars to attend one of the

special meetings

to be held on Saturday, April 17th at 9:00 a.m. or on Monday, April 19th at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at DeSoto City Hall sponsored by the Board of Directors and Coordinators of the DeSoto Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.).

The DeSoto C.E.R.T. program offers basic training in disaster survival and rescue skills for citizens. Once trained, these citizen volunteers assist public safety personnel in performing critical functions necessary during the early stages of a catastrophic disaster. The program has grown to over 60 volunteers and opportunities abound! At the meetings, volunteers and guests will be briefed on Teams, regular meetings, training opportunities, civic activities where we can assist, C.E.R.T. competitions and much more.

If you're a current member, please come to a meeting, dust off your backpacks, crank up the activity level and show the citizens of DeSoto that C.E.R.T. is here for their preparedness and safety. If you're not a member but would like more information on the program, please attend one of the meetings.

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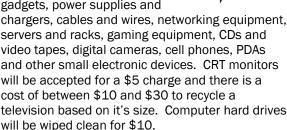
Earth Month Newsletter - DeSoto Is Going Green

Electronics Recycling

Old TV's and electronics can be placed out for pick-up with your regular trash service. However, when Republic Waste (Duncan Disposal) collects them, they go to our landfill and are not recycled. Tossing hundreds of computers, TVs and cell phones into landfills poses serious health and environmental risks. Today, most electronic components can be resused, recycled and diverted from the waste stream. The City of DeSoto, in conjunction with E-Waste Collections, is doing our part to keep electronics out of our landfill by offering recycling of electronic equipment during Earth Month.

On Saturday, April 24th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., bring your unwanted electronic items to the DeSoto Service Center located at 809 W. Spinner Road for recycling. Here's a list of items that will be accepted for recycling free

of charge: personal computers, laptops and notebooks, flat screen monitors, keyboards and mice, printers and copiers, toner and ink cartridges, fax machines, peripherals and gadgets, power supplies and



Help us protect the environment by keeping electronic waste materials out of landfills and putting them back into the manufacturing process to make new products.

Recycle - It's Good for the Environment

CITY CALENDAR

April

- 1 Special Council Mtg. to discuss CIP 6 p.m. City Hall
- 1 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. 6:30 p.m. City Hall
- 1 Library Advisory Board Mtg. 7 p.m. Library Conference Room
- 5 Arts Commission 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
- 10 Concerned DeSoto Citizens Candidate Forum City Hall 10 a.m. noon
- 10 Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event voucher required, call 972. 230.9600 to request a voucher
- 13 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. 7 p.m. City Hall
- 16 "A Song For Coretta" opens at Corner Theatre
- 21 City Council Meeting 7 p.m. City Hall
- 24 E-Recycling & Shredding Event DeSoto Service Ctr., 800 Spinner 9-1pm
- 26 DEDC Board Meeting noon City Hall
- 27 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. 7 p.m. City Hall
- 28 Youth Video Game Tournament Rec. Center Youth Room 7-9 p.m.

May

- 3 Arts Commission Mtg. 6:30 p.m. City Hall
- 3 Park Development Corp. Mtg. 6:30 p.m. Recreation Center
- 4 City Council Meeting 7 p.m. City Hall
- 6 National Day of Prayer Observance City Hall 7 a.m.
- 6 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. 6:30 p.m. City Hall
- 6 Library Advisory Board Mtg. 7 p.m. Library Conference Room
- 8 Municipal Election Day voting at Town Center 7 a.m. 7 p.m.
- 11 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. 7 p.m. City Hall
- 15 DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Dinner Event call 972.230.9648 for info.
- 18 City Council Meeting 7 p.n. City Hall
- 24 DEDC Board Meeting noon City Hall
- 25 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. 7 p.m. City Hall
- 27 Youth Dodge Ball Tournament Recreation Ctr. 7-8:30 p.m.
- 31 Memorial Day Holiday City Offices and some facilities closed

The City of DeSoto offers once a week curbside recycling for all residents. Recycle GREEN bins are available from the Utility Billing Department at a cost of \$5 each. New residents receive one GREEN bin when they initiate water service. The GREEN bins are emptied once a week on Wednesdays and must be put out for pick-up in the alley or by the front curb by 7 a.m.

Items that can be placed in the Recycle GREEN bins include;

- Plastic—Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 (look for the Recycling Triangle usually found on the bottom on the container or the number)
- All colors of glass bottles can be recycled. Only bottles are accepted. Plate glass, ceramic and mirrors are not accepted.
- All aluminum food and beverage cans can be recycled. It's not necessary to remove the label, but please remember to remove the lids
 and rinse out all food. Aluminum foil is not accepted.
- Newspapers, catalogs, magazines, junk mail, cardboard and mixed household paper can be recycled. Tissues, wet paper or paper contaminated with food products are not accepted. All cardboard must be broken down to a size that will fit inside your recycle bin. Larger boxes can be flattened and placed under your recycle bin for pick-up.

Avoid Identity Theft by Shredding Your Personal Documents

Identity theft is a serious problem in today's society. One way to protect yourself is to make sure that 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 items you wish to shred to the DeSoto Service Center located at 809 W. Spinner Road on Saturday, April 24, 2010 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be a mobile document shredding unit on-site to shred your personal household documents at no cost. (Commercial documents will not be accepted.) You must show proof of DeSoto residency with a

driver's license or current utility bill.

Please place all your documents in boxes. Do not bring them loose in bags as documents must be stacked to go into the shredder. If you prefer, you can watch your documents being shredded. There is no limit to the amount



of household material you may bring for shredding. However, if you bring a large amount and choose to view them being shredded, you will be asked to step out of line and wait in order to get as many people through the line as possible. If you have any questions regarding household document shredding, please call the City of DeSoto Action Center at 972.230.9600.

Do You Need A Helping Hand? Great Days of Service Can Help!

"Great Days of Service", a cooperative effort between the City of DeSoto, area churches and community volunteers, is looking for homes in DeSoto that need painting and/or repairs. These homes must be owner occupied and the homeowner should be elderly, disabled or financially challenged. The work will be done by volunteers during the week of June 23rd through 26th

but applications for service must be received by May 1, 2010. If you know of someone who can benefit from this program, please contact Tracie Hlavinka at 972.230.9689 to request an application for service.



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' or neighborhood association members by asking them to report code violations such as high grass or junk cars in their neighborhood. That program has been expanded to 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 neighborhoods.

As we move into spring, neighborhoods may start to experience problems with high weeds at vacant homes. The Expanded Eyes & Ears program allows HOAs or



neighborhood associations 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 notified and has seven days to mow the property.
- On the eighth day, the Code Enforcement Officer will reinspect 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 where applicable.

Before this program was instituted, mowing contractors were hired to mow the vacant property extending the time before the property was mowed. Now, HOA or neighborhood association 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 or neighborhood association is paid \$50 for each yard mowed under this program.

In order to participate in the Eyes & Ears Program, the HOA or neighborhood association must be registered with the City of DeSoto's Community Initiatives Manager. For more information or to participate in this program, please call Tracie Hlavinka at 972.230.9689.

You keep our tax dollars working for us when you..... Shop DeSoto First

When you purchase goods or services in DeSoto, a portion of the sales tax you pay comes back to our community to fund city operations, services and public safety. That is why the DeSoto Chamber of Commerce is initiating their Shop DeSoto First program beginning April 15th. Merchants who display the decal pictured at right are offering "Hot Deals" to customers who present a Shop DeSoto First discount card. Those discount cards can be purchased for \$10 from the Chamber or any participating merchant. For more information, contact the Chamber at 972.224.3565 or info@desotochamber.org.



Do you know your neighbors? Do you feel personally connected to the DeSoto community? Have you attended a DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Dinner event? If your answer to these questions is no, please consider this your personal invitation to attend the next DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Dinner event scheduled for Saturday, May 15, 2010 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. For more information about DeSoto Dining and Dialogue and to register your attendance, please go to www.desotodininganddialogue.org or call 972.230.9648.



CDC To Host Candidate Forum

On Saturday, April 10, 2010 at 10 a.m., Concerned DeSoto Citizens will host a Candidate Forum in the City Council Chambers at DeSoto City Hall. The public is invited to attend this forum to meet the candidates who are running for Mayor and open places on the DeSoto City Council and DeSoto Independent School District Board of Trustees. The forum will be broadcast live and replayed on the city's government access cable channel 16 for Time Warner subscribers and on the City website through election day on May 8, 2010.

DeSoto Police Host 13th Annual Safer Senior Citizen Symposium & Health Fair - May 18th

For the last 13 years, the DeSoto Police Department has been committed to working with senior citizens to help enrich their lives by sponsoring a free Safer Seniors Symposium and Health Fair. This year, it will take place on Tuesday, May 18, 2010 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at the Community Missionary Baptist Church, 115 W. Belt Line Rd. DeSoto residents, 55 years of age and older, are encouraged to attend this event to receive information about personal safety and home security, health and legal issues facing seniors, and information on avoiding scams or fraud targeting the senior population.

Attendance is limited to the first 200 people who register. If you would like to attend, please call Officer Cindy Mendez at 469.658.3055 to request an application before May 1, 2010.

Is your Organization Looking for a Community Service Project?

As a part of the city's storm water management program, volunteers have marked many of the city's storm drains with the decal below. This decal alerts residents not to put trash, grass clippings, pesticides or motor oil down these drains because they flow to the creek and can cause pollution problems. Many new

subdivisions and streets have been constructed since this program began and they need to be marked with these decals. The city is looking for scout troops, civic organizations or concerned citizens interested in assisting with this volunteer effort. For more information, please call Tracie Hlavinka at 972.230.9689 and help keep our storm water lines free of debris.

