

DeSoto City Lights

A Publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department

City Highlights - 2012

In May of 2011, the DeSoto City Council made the decision to promote Tarron Richardson, Ph.D. to the position of City Manager. Since that time, several changes have been implemented that resulted in improvements to City Administration and its internal processes. Below are a select few highlights (by department) that have taken place within the last year.

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

AT&T U-Verse Broadcasting: The City of DeSoto upgraded its Granicus server allowing the City's Government Access Cable Channel programming to be broadcast on AT&T U-Verse in addition to Time Warner Cable.

Performance Measures: City Administration implemented the first official five year cycle Performance Measurement System. This system will track statistical performance while outlining City efficiencies and inefficiencies.

Council District Lines: With the help of University of Texas, Arlington's School of Urban and Public Affairs, successful redistricting of DeSoto, Texas took place. This redistricting created parity among council districts, according to population and geographic mapping.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

City Monuments: Smaller versions of the City's landmark monument were placed at each major entry-point to the City. The City of DeSoto 2003 Comprehensive Plan Update called for the installation of entry-way monuments which make visitors and residents aware that they are in a "special place." The new entry-way monuments are positioned to allow the greatest amount of traffic to notice that they are entering the All-America City of DeSoto.

Cockrell Hill Construction: Phase One of the Cockrell Hill Road reconstruction was completed in cooperation with Dallas County. Phase Two of the Cockrell Hill Road improvement from Belt Line Road to Parkerville Road has begun with utility relocation and site preparation. Construction is scheduled to begin in Quarter Two of FY2012. Dallas County widens the roadway from two to four lanes and improves the drainage. The City of DeSoto funds the installation of lighting, landscaping and irrigation. The result is improved mobility, better physical appearance and safer roadways.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Selection of New Executive Director: City Administration participated in the interview of prospective candidates and selection of a new DEDC Executive Director.

Kohl's E-Fulfillment Distribution Center: In conjunction with the City of DeSoto's Administration Department, the finalization of this deal is expected to create several hundred full-time, part-time, and seasonal jobs.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Balanced Budget: With constant changes to the organizational structure and in the midst of an ongoing recession, the City of DeSoto was able to maintain a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2012.

AA Bond Upgrade: In Fiscal Year 2012, the City of DeSoto received a bond upgrade to "AA" status from Fitch IBCA. This further cements the City's status as a financially stable, reliable, consistent, and growing municipality.

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Register Now to Attend the Next DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Dinner Event on April 28th

Do you know your neighbor? Do you feel connected to the DeSoto community? Have you ever attended a DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Dinner event? If your answer to any of these questions is no, please accept this as your personal invitation to attend our next free dinner event on April 28, 2012. Everyone who lives or works in DeSoto and cares about our community is encouraged to attend. As a guest, all you have to do is attend and join in on the discussion. Repeat guests are also welcome. Please register your attendance at www.desotodd.org no later than April 16, 2012 or call 972.230.9648 for more information.

City Calendar

March

1 Town Hall Mtg. - City Hall - 5:30 to 7 pm
1 KDB Mtg. City Hall - 6:30 pm
1 Library Board Mtg. Library - 7 pm
3&4 "Color Us Black" - Corner Theatre
5 Park Board Mtg. - Civic Ctr.- 6:30 pm
5 Arts Commission Mtg. - City Hall - 6 pm
6 City Council Mtg. - Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm
8 Historical Foundation Mtg. City Hall 6pm
11 DBDT - Corner Theatre - 3 pm
13 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
20 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
23 Literary Café - Civic Ctr. - 7 pm
26 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - noon
27 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
31 Easter Egg Hunt - Town Ctr. - noon

April

3 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
5 KDB Mtg. City Hall - 6:30 pm
5 Library Board Mtg. Library - 7 pm
5 DESOTO READS! Day
9 Park Board Mtg. - Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm
9 Arts Commission Mtg. - City Hall - 6 pm
10 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
12 Historical Foundation Mtg. City Hall 6pm
17 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
21 Recycling Event - Service Ctr. - 9 am
24 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
28 Family Farm Festival @ Nance Farm
28 DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Dinner Event
30 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - noon

Join Us for the Family Farm Festival on Saturday, April 28th 9 am - 5 pm Celebrating the Public Grand Opening of Historic Nance Farm

The first phase of the restoration of Historic Nance Farm, located at 1325 Greenbrook Drive in the Mantlebrook subdivision, is now complete and we are ready to show it off to the public. The DeSoto, Texas Historical Foundation invites you to join them for a full day of entertainment with music, a melodrama, poetry and storytellers, living history demonstrations, farm animals and pony rides, a chuck wagon cook-off, tea cakes and prairie food favorites, old - fashioned carnival games, horseshoes, checkers, 42 and watermelon seed tournaments and much more. Docents in period costumes will provide tours of the home and out buildings. Watch this newsletter for more information on the Family Farm Festival or contact Marikay Dewberry at 214.532.5902 or dewkraft@swbell.net.

Do You Love Your iPhone?

Did you know that the city's website (www.desototexas.gov)

has a mobile version?

Access it on your smart phone to find answers to your questions. The site will automatically detect that you are using a smartphone and display the text and links without all the large graphics.

The city also has several apps available for the iPhone. The GoRequest app allows you to report high grass and weeds, falling-down fences, illegally parked cars and more! Simply download the GoRequest app, select the

violation you are reporting from the

dropdown list, take a picture of it, and hit submit. The issue will automatically be entered into our system and routed to the correct person for action. (This app is also available in the Android Marketplace.)

Another app available for the iPhone is TIP411. Download this app to anonymously report crime tips to the DeSoto Police Department. You can also text an anonymous crime

tip from any phone by sending the keyword DESOTO and your tip to 847411 (tip411).



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FIRE DEPARTMENT

Accreditation: The Dallas County Community Colleges District has announced the City of DeSoto's Fire Training Academy as a fully accredited partner. This designation allows students to transfer credits to DCCCD. It also speaks to the quality of education that students receive at the City of DeSoto's Fire Training Academy.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Neogov: Implementation of this online system streamlines the posting, application, screening, and hiring process for all future/potential City of DeSoto employees. Neogov allows for a smoother, more consistent and universal hiring process across all departments.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

iPads to the City Council: Keeping up with the times and the latest in technology, iPads were provided to City Councilmembers to manage City schedules, contacts, itineraries, and workloads. Use of the iPads has also eliminated the need for hardcopies of City Council Meeting Agendas. The inclusion of this technology facilitates improved communication between Councilmembers and staff.

City Website: A recent update to the City's website now configures information in an easy to find fashion and provides a

cleaner, more up-to-date look. New photos make the website much more visually appealing and a redesign of the calendar function provides users several options for accessing information about City events and activities.

DeSotoTexas.gov: A website transition from www.ci.desoto.tx.us to www.DeSotoTexas.gov makes locating the website easier and fits with the logic of what is commonly expected for a municipal government website.

PARKS & LEISURE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Youth Programs: After school and summertime programs for City youth have been established throughout the year (i.e. Summertime on Belt Line, Winter Break Activities, Spring Break Activities, etc.). These programs offer a safe environment for youth and provide them an atmosphere that is both constructive and active.

City Manager's Golf Challenge: PALS staff organized the City Manager's Golf Challenge to facilitate fund raising efforts to support the youth programs mentioned above. This first time effort was a success. In future years, the Golf Challenge will allow influential networking between the City, businesses, other government entities, and potential partners. In addition, a fun activity is now provided to all employees who wish to participate. (continued on page three)

What's New at the DeSoto Public Library

April 5, 2012 is DESOTO READS! Day

On April 5, 2012, the DeSoto Public Library Advisory Board, in collaboration with various members of the DeSoto community, will kick off a program designed to promote the value of reading to citizens of all ages called **DESOTO READS**.

Reading is essential to learning! The Library Advisory Board understands that reading is a critical predictor of school success and we want to help our students to be successful. On **DESOTO READS Day**, Library Board members, city officials, school administrators, Friends of DeSoto Public Library and others will be reading books that they choose to students in schools and other settings throughout the community in support of student learning. A poster contest is a related activity to **DESOTO READS**.

DESOTO READS will have several possible benefits including:

- Promotion of reading and increased use of the city's library
- Enhancement of personal growth, which in turn, strengthens community growth and positive city image
- Engagement between adult citizens and students of all ages, creating a better understanding and appreciation of one another
- Fostering literacy and strengthening collaborative partnerships

Once the first phase of **DESOTO READS** is accomplished on April 5th, members of the DeSoto Public Library Teen Council will expand the initiative into the neighborhoods, apartments, parks and churches during the summer with their 'Take It to the Streets' program. For further information, please feel free to contact Linda Lamar, Library Advisory Board Chair at 214.773.0552 or linda.lamar1@att.net or Erica Kennard, Marketing and Public Relations for the Library Advisory Board at 972.672.8194 or kenardERICA@gmail.com.

Smart Planting - Plants That Thrive in Southwest Dallas County will be presented at the DeSoto Public Library from 11 a.m. to noon on Saturday, March 31, 2012. Sandi Ciarochi, Dallas County Master Gardener, will discuss native and adoptive plants appropriate for the DeSoto area including Earth-Kind® and Texas Superstar® plants and Water-Wise gardening practices. Ms. Ciarochi has been involved with the Dallas County Master Gardeners Association since 2003 and is associated with the Native Plant Society of Texas, the North Texas Native Plant Society, and the Dallas Arboretum. She is a Certified Plant Propagation Specialist and a graduate of the Texas A&M Landscape School. This program is free and open to the public. The library is located at 211 E. Pleasant Run Road in the DeSoto Town Center Complex. Free parking is available in the nearby parking garage. For more information, please call the library at 972.230.9661.

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POLICE DEPARTMENT

Vest Covers: DeSoto Police Officers have been issued body armor vest covers. These vest covers promote a greater sense of security for officers along with providing a more presentable appearance.

View Observation Cameras: The use of these cameras by officers has provided accountability, on both sides of the law. The videos recorded on these cameras facilitate a clearer understanding of exactly what happens as police officers interact with the public in the line of duty.

Formation of DeSoto Police and Clergy (DPAC): This team-based program seeks to build a sense of trust, openness, and communication between police officers and the general public, especially youth, by partnering with the clergy. DPAC members are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through the Minister On Call Program, to respond to domestic violence or other violent crime scenes. The primary objective of this partnership between DeSoto Police and pastors is to say "No More" to youth violence, drugs, fighting and failing and to provide a positive response in domestic violence situations.

PUBLIC UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

Creation of the Public Utilities Department: Entering the new budget year, City Administration elected to form a department which placed the Utility Billing, Water, and Wastewater operations of the City under one umbrella called the Public Utilities Department. This required a restructuring of Finance and Development Services and the appointment of a new Managing Director of Public Utilities.

Playaway Audiobooks Now Available at the Library

Beginning March 1, the DeSoto Public Library will check out children's books on Playaway players. Playaways are preloaded audiobooks which do not require a separate player. All users have to do is check out the machine, turn it on, and begin listening to their favorite children's books. The Playaways will check out for three weeks and will have the same late charges as print books. For more information, please call the Children's Information Desk at 972.230.9666.



No More Plastic Bags!

The Friends of the DeSoto Public Library are selling book bags to benefit the library's collections and programs. The "save the environment" green bags are on sale at the Check Out Desk for \$1.75 each. For information, call 972.230.9665.

Book Lovers, Join Us for the Literary Café

Promoting literacy and local authors, the DeSoto Arts Commission will host our second Literary Café on Friday, March 23, 2012 at 7 p.m. in the Bluebonnet Rooms at the DeSoto Civic Center. Featured authors from many different genres will read or perform from their works, with interludes from musical and culinary selections. Patrons will have the opportunity to hold discussion with the authors and purchase products on site. Special guests will be Delta Authors on Tour sponsored by the Dallas Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Confirmed authors include: J.A. Adams, Deondria Cantrice, Barbara Coleman, Antionette Franklin, Frank Hammond, Don Horne, Jacqueline Levermore, Sylvia Lucas, Ruth Mayfield, Dr. Njoki McElroy, Linda Moye, Dr. Sheron Patterson, Francis Ray, Kim Robinson, Toni Simmons, Kat Smith, Michelle Stimpson, Marco Walder and Sandra Wilkerson.

The DeSoto Arts Commission invites you to attend this exploration of local literary talent from all genres. Whether you are an avid or occasional reader, come and gather information on the latest releases, as well as what's on the shelves of the DeSoto Library. Admission is free. For more information, please call 972.230.9648.

DESOTO ARTS COMMISSION presents our second annual **Literary Café**

Friday, March 23, 2012
DeSoto Civic Center
Blue Bonnet Rooms
7:00 to 10:00 p.m.
Free admission

For more information please contact the DeSoto Arts Commission at thedacts@yahoo.com or Kathy Maples Jones at 972-230-9648

DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE

Sunday, March 11, 2012 3 p.m. DeSoto Corner Theater
Tickets: \$10 adults \$8 students & seniors
 The DeSoto Arts Commission is proud to present this special performance of the Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Dallas' oldest and continually operating dance company. Their performances showcase cutting edge, modern dance performances which seek to bridge cultures and reach diverse communities. Seating is limited. For tickets, please call 972.230.9648.

DeSoto Sol Jazz Festival
 June 9, 2012
 THE 2012 DESOTO SOL JAZZ MUSIC FESTIVAL
DESOTO EAGLE STADIUM
www.desotosoljazzfest.com

desoto arts commission presents

BROADWAY RHYTHM II

A musical revue of some of the most powerful & motivating songs from our generation.

Sat. March 31st at noon

Easter Egg Hunt

Age groups 0 - 3 and 4 - 7. Free Admission. Bring your basket. For info call 972.230.9651.

at DeSoto Town Center Plaza
 Sponsored by Parks & Leisure Services

Project Create Community presents:

Tuggin' Of the Greens
 Sat. March 10th
 10am - 2pm
 Kid Zone, Music, Food, Fun
 469.777.6564

live Loud!

THE CORNER THEATER
 April 28th & 29th 2012 | 7:30
 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd. | \$10 General Admission

NEED INFO?
kathy.jones@desototexas.gov | 972-230-9648
www.desotoartscommission.com