

DeSoto City Lights

A Publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department

The Proposed FY2018 City of DeSoto Municipal Budget Calls for a Decrease in the Property Tax Rate

“Since my appointment to the position of City Manager in 2011, my Administration has been working tirelessly and with due diligence to improve the monetary situation of our community,” said Tarron Richardson, PhD. “I am pleased to propose a tax rate reduction for FY2018 to .7399 per \$100 of valuation.”

For the last six (6) years, City Administration has meticulously toiled to reduce property tax rates for both residents and business owners. After four (4) years of maintaining a stabilized property tax rate of .7574, the City was able to reduce it by .0075 in FY2016 and again by .0050 in FY2017. The proposed FY2018 budget will continue in this direction by reducing the property tax rate for a third year in a row. In FY2018, the proposed property tax rate will be reduced by .0050 and set at .7399.

The municipal property tax rate of .7399 will provide funding for debt service, personnel, benefits, public services, supplies, equipment and capital projects. These previously mentioned line items were either drastically reduced or completely removed from budgets prior to FY2012. In FY2012, the City’s Executive Leadership Team began working in collaboration with each other to annually increase funding for these defined essentials and collectively agreed that it would take a few fiscal years to accomplish.

On April 6, 2017, the DeSoto City Council and Administration began preparing a preliminary budget plan that included the following defined goals and objectives for FY2018:

- Salary increases in the amount of 2%
- Same public service levels as FY2017 with a 1% estimated growth factor
- Funding for Domestic Violence Advisory Committee
- Funding for TEX-21
- Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT) Grant

“As we move forward into FY2018 and beyond, the City of DeSoto will continue to implement a wealth of innovative practices in public finance to better manage its human and monetary resources” said Dr. Richardson. “The success achieved over the years is attributed to our conservative approach toward budgeting and management of all public affairs.”

Public hearings on the proposed FY2018 Budget and Tax Year 2017 rate will be held during the regular DeSoto City Council Meetings on August 15, 2017 and September 5, 2017 and the budget and tax rate are slated for adoption at the September 19, 2017 City Council Meeting. Copies of the full budget document are available for review on the City’s website at www.desototexas.gov, at the Action Center in Jim Baugh Government Center, at the DeSoto Public Library and the DeSoto Senior Activity Center.



City Calendar

August

1 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
1 National Night Out - 7 to 9 pm
3 Historical Foundation Mtg. - 6 pm
3 KDB Mtg. Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm
3 Library Board Mtg. Library - 7 pm
4 Sing Outdoor Movie - 8:30pm
7 Arts Commission Mtg. - Civic Ctr. - 6pm
7 Park Board Mtg. - Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm
8 Planning & Zoning Mtg. -City Hall -7 pm
11 Hidden Figures Outdoor Movie 8:30 pm
15 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
22 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
25 Forte Band Concert Amphitheater - 8pm
28 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - 9 am

September

1 Special Council Mtg. to Canvas Election -
City Hall - 6 pm
4 City Facilities closed for Labor Day - no
trash collection
4 Arts Commission Mtg. Canceled
5 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
7 Library Board Mtg. Library - 7 pm
7 KDB Mtg. Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm
7 Historical Foundation Mtg.- 6 pm
9 Latino Fest - Amphitheater 6 - 10 pm
11 Special Park Board Mtg. Civic Ctr. 6 pm
12 Planning & Zoning Mtg.- City Hall -7 pm
19 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm
21 Adopt-a-Street Banquet - Civic Ctr. 7 pm
25 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - 9 am
25 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm

The DeSoto Public Library hosted a "Family Fun Day" on August 5th with more than 350 in attendance. This event (pictured below) was presented as a way to say thank you to the community for supporting the Library Summer Reading Program.



Information Technology Receives Technology Solutions Award

The Public Technology Institute recently announced that City of DeSoto is one of the Significant Achievement Award recipients of the 2017 Technology Solutions Awards. This annual awards program recognizes PTI member local governments for their use of technology to enhance government services and operations. DeSoto received the Significant Achievement Award for the implementation of paperless processes and E-Court in the DeSoto Municipal Court.

DeSoto's E-Court program allows residents to conduct nearly all of their business with the court without ever setting foot in the building, including requesting a driver safety course or even having a face-to-face video conference meeting with the judge. To meet the judge live online, defendants just download a free app and enter the court meeting number (printed on the ticket) at the appropriate time. No appointment is necessary.

Attending an E-Court Appearance allows the defendant to:

- Enter a Plea of NOT GUILTY and request a trial by judge or trial by jury on a later date. However, please note that trials are *not* held via the E-Court Appearance video conference and will require the defendant to appear in person at the courtroom of the DeSoto Municipal Court.
- Enter a plea of guilty or no contest. Defendants who plead GUILTY or NO CONTEST via the E-Court Appearance have the same opportunities for payment plans, compliance dismissals, driver safety courses, or deferred disposition.
- Request an extension of the due dates established by a previous judgment. You will need to be prepared to provide extenuating circumstances to the judge as to why an extension is needed.
- Seek resolution of outstanding warrants

via the establishment of a payment plan.

Cases that are ELIGIBLE for E-Court Appearance include:

- No Driver's License
- Driving while license invalid
- Driving with suspended driver's license
- Failure to change address on driver's license
- Failure to maintain financial responsibility (no insurance)
- Expired registration
- Defective equipment
- Failure to obey the direction of a police officer
- All moving violations (i.e. generally any violation involving the movement of the automobile)
- Ordinance violations
- Code violations

Cases that are NOT ELIGIBLE for E-Court Appearance include:

- Disorderly conduct
- Public intoxication
- Theft
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Assault
- Cases in which the prosecutor has exercised his/her right to be heard on the case
- All other penal code violations

For more information on DeSoto's E-Court go to:

<http://www.desototexas.gov/1667/E-Court-Appearance>

Congratulations to DeSoto's Information Technology Department and Municipal Court for their innovative use of technology to streamline operations and on winning this award.

Labor Day Trash Schedule

Labor Day is one of the five holidays observed by Republic Waste, the City's solid waste contractor. As a result, there will be no regular trash service on Monday, September 4, 2017. Regular Monday customers will have their trash collected on Tuesday that week and regular Tuesday collection will take place on Wednesday. Recycling will be collected on Thursday. Thursday solid waste collection will move to Friday and regular Friday customers will have their solid waste collected on Saturday. The normal schedule will resume on Monday, September 11, 2017. If you have any questions about your trash service, please call the Action Center at 972.230.9600.

DeSoto Police Announce Community Security Camera Program

“Video from a neighbor’s security camera was instrumental in helping DeSoto Police Officers identify the suspect accused of murdering an elderly man recently,” according to Sgt. Nic Bristow of the DeSoto Police. “If we have information regarding the existence of private surveillance cameras in an area where a crime has been committed and can quickly access the data from the camera, the odds of a quick resolution to that crime greatly improve.”

As a result, the DeSoto Police Department is announcing a new volunteer crime prevention initiative called the Community Security Camera Program. The program encourages businesses and residents of the City of DeSoto whose property is equipped with a security camera to register their address with the DeSoto Police Department.

Video surveillance is one of the best and most widely used methods of apprehending criminals and convicting suspects who are arrested and charged with a crime in the City of DeSoto. Sharing video surveillance with the Police Department is a great example of community and police partnerships and highly valued by law enforcement. Utilizing this tool is another way we are serving our community. DeSoto Police invite businesses and residents to take part in the process by voluntarily agreeing to share your privately owned surveillance camera system recordings with us.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

Registering your video surveillance system with the DeSoto Police Department, allows our officers and investigators to request access to the video footage from your camera while investigating a crime in your area. At no time will the DeSoto Police Department have access to your

cameras or video footage. This access can only be provided to the police by you, the business owner or homeowner.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF REGISTERING YOUR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM?

If a crime occurs near your residence or business, your surveillance system might have captured images or



information that could be helpful in solving that crime. Your cooperation in providing video footage to the Police Department helps keep our community safe because it may assist in the apprehension, arrest and possible prosecution of persons involved in criminal activity.

HOW IS MY PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTED IF I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM?

Information provided to the DeSoto Police Department from your surveillance system is for Official Use Only. Your personal information will remain confidential and will only be accessed by authorized persons within the DeSoto Police Department. The information will not be distributed except as required by Texas Law or Court Order.

REGISTRATION

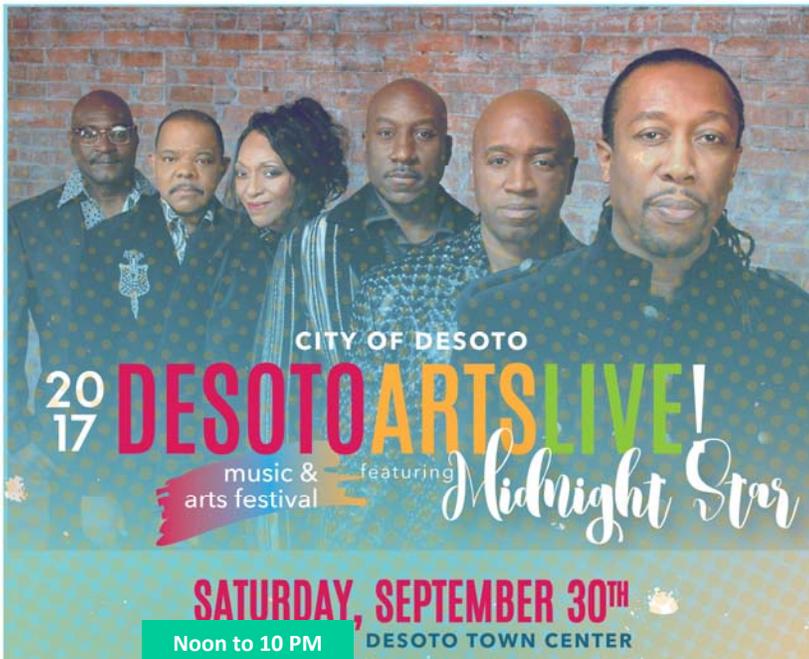
If you would like to volunteer your assistance with the program, please register your video surveillance system with the DeSoto Police Department. To request a registration form or for more information, please call the Police Records Division at 469.658.3021.

DeSoto Hosts Active Shooter Exercise for Emergency Medical Responders

DeSoto’s Meadow’s Elementary was the recent training site for a Live Active Shooter/MCI exercise for Dallas based government agencies, including FBI, DPS, State Police, US Marshals and local S.W.A.T members. (See pictures below.) This exercise was the concluding portion of the Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) class that was held at DeSoto’s Fire Training Center recently.

Special thanks goes to the Cedar Hill, Duncanville and DeSoto Fire Departments for assisting with field ride outs during the training and also to Terry Sanders and Darrell Riley with the DeSoto Independent School District for helping to coordinate the use of Meadows Elementary for the live scenario.





The DeSoto Arts Commission is gearing up for the 2nd annual *DeSoto Arts Live!* Music & Arts Festival on Saturday, September 30th. This is the event that featured the concert with the Original Lakeside band in 2016. The Commission is working hard to make it bigger and better this year by expanding the art show with many more vendors displaying and selling their work, a free gaming truck and inflatables for the kids, lots of great food and

non-stop musical entertainment on three stages culminating in a special performance by 80's recording artist Midnight Star.

DeSoto Arts Live! Celebrates The Visual Arts with:

- An expanded Artist's Row featuring booths with local visual artists selling and displaying their work
- Visual artists participating in the Plein Air competition capturing the sites and images of the event as they paint on-site
- A breath-taking demonstration of spray paint art provided by Cosmo Universal Art from 2 to 5 pm



DeSoto Arts Live! Celebrates Dance with:

- A **Dance Party on the Green** from 2 to 6 pm in the plaza in front of the Corner Theatre
- Trinity Christian School's Drumline will get the dance party started at 2 pm
- Followed by a free Zumba demonstration, and line dancers
- And a special performance at 4 pm on the "green" by Bandan Koro African Drummers and Dancers.



DeSoto Arts Live! Celebrates Various Genres of Music on two stages with:

- Kid'z Zone Stage will feature the Hip-Hop Gospel sounds of TROMP at 2 pm and the R&B and NeoSoul of Elise Amara at 5 pm
- On the Main Amphitheater Stage enjoy great George Strait-style Country Music performed by DeSoto's own singing cowboy, Joe King, at 1 pm, followed by the hot sounds of Latin Fire at 3 pm and be inspired by a special performance of the Inspiration Band at 5:30 pm
- You'll want to be sure to have a great spot at the Amphitheater Stage beginning at 6:30 pm to hear Celebrity the Comedian, followed by the winner of the Beneath the Star Poetry Contest and singer, song writer and poet Gem Woods, leading up to "No Parking On The Dance Floor" and other Top 40 Hits performed by 80's recoding artist, **MIDNIGHT STAR**.

Vendor opportunities for visual artists and crafters and a few food vendors are still available. For more information about vendor opportunities or to volunteer go to www.desotoartslive.com or call 972.230.9648.