

# DeSoto City Lights

*A Publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department*

## ***“The State Of Our City Is Solid As A Rock”***

By Matt Smith, Communications Manager

On Thursday, February 7, 2019, the DeSoto Chamber of Commerce welcomed Mayor Curtistene S. McCowan to the City’s Civic Center to deliver her 2019 State of the City Address before a lunchtime gathering of members of DeSoto’s business and civic communities.

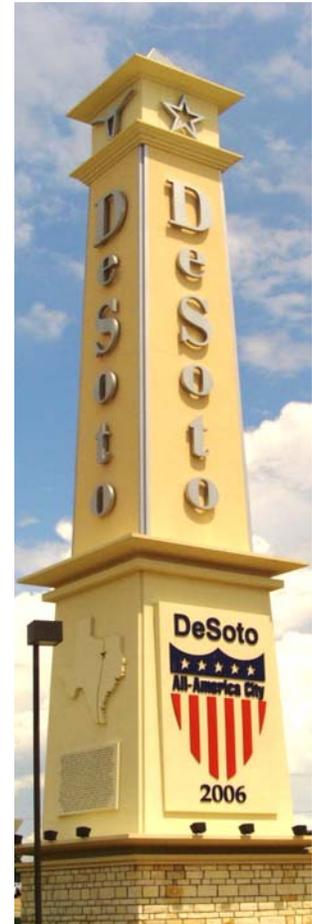
The theme of this year’s address, “Excellence in Balance,” provided Mayor McCowan with the opportunity to highlight the City’s successful efforts to strengthen the municipal workforce, upgrade finances and jumpstart economic development. By exercising responsible governmental stewardship, the Mayor noted that DeSoto has been able to hold the line on property taxes for the past eight years while reducing them for the last four, secure two bond rating upgrades, generate impressive growth in revenue and reserve funds, build a stronger workforce, improve service delivery, and lower the crime rate.

“Given these steady accomplishments and numerous recognitions received from organizations that rate government effectiveness, I can say without hesitation that the State of our City is solid! Solid as a rock!” declared Mayor McCowan.

Among the recognitions that the Mayor was referring to were DeSoto’s third straight Digital Cities Award, Accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Parks & Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), Accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), an ISO Class 1 Fire Department Rating, Texas Municipal Library Directors Association recognition and the Government Finance Officers Association’s Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting and Distinguished Budget Presentation Award.

One of the biggest success stories, and challenges, that the Mayor spoke of in her address was the administration’s efforts to acquire and retain high-quality workers.

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## City Calendar

### February

2 Daddy Daughter Dance Civic Ctr. 7 pm  
4 Arts Commission Mtg. Civic Ctr. - 6 pm  
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  
12 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall 7 pm  
19 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm  
22 Dallas Black Dance DHS Auditorium 7pm  
25 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - 9 am

### March

4 Arts Commission Mtg. Civic Ctr. 6:30 pm  
5 City Council Mtg.—City Hall 7 pm  
3 Library Board Mtg. Library - 7 pm  
7 KDB Mtg. Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm  
7 Mayor's Quarterly Mtg. Civic Ctr. 6:30pm  
7 Historical Foundation Mtg. City Hall 6pm  
12 Planning & Zoning Mtg.- City Hall -7 pm  
19 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm  
21 Board & Commission Banquet  
22 Zydeco Concert Corner Theatre 7pm  
25 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - 9 am  
26 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - Civic Ctr. -7 pm  
30 Town Hall Mtg. -

## Connecting the Community With Valuable Resources

"I think it's so important that our residents have easy access to information regarding social services and resources available to them in our area," said DeSoto Mayor ProTem Rachel Proctor. "Many valuable resources out there often go unused, not because there isn't a need for them but because the people that need them aren't aware they exist. That's why we, as a City, put forth the effort to bring awareness to the Texas 2-1-1 program."

Texas 2-1-1 is a valuable database that houses information for community resources ranging from assistance with health care ([cont. on page three](#))

## There's A New Way To Connect With DeSoto's Municipal Court

Defendants and the public can now correspond with DeSoto Municipal Court staff directly through a text message conversation or through a web chat on the court's webpage. This latest functionality is designed to provide even more convenience for defendant's to get answers to questions they have on their cases. Many defendants are also able to resolve their cases by chatting with court staff because the court is able to capture defendant signatures electronically on forms for deferred disposition, driver's safety course, or payment plans. No longer will defendants have to wait in line at the court house or take off from work to resolve your cases. To get started simply send a text message to 972.737.7558 or click on the **CHAT BUTTON** on the courts web page at [www.desototexas.gov/court](http://www.desototexas.gov/court).

If the court staff is unavailable on the chat feature, defendants can still click on the **✉** button to leave the clerks an email message. They will respond to you as soon as they can. If text messaging and chatting via SnapEngage are not the choice of a defendant, they can video conference with Judge Scott E. Kurth everyday Monday through Friday at 11 am by simply downloading the <https://zoom.us/join> app and type in the Meeting ID: 582-661-129.



# Town Hall Meeting

Saturday, March 30th 10 am  
DeSoto City Hall  
211 E. Pleasant Run Road



Mayor Curtistene S. McCowan invites you to join us at DeSoto City Hall for an important Town Hall Meeting featuring a panel of experts including Judge Margaret Jones Johnson of the Dallas County Veterans Court and representatives from the VA Outreach program who will address mental health issues that affect our Veterans. We will also host a benefits fair with representatives from the VA who will assist Veterans with applying for benefits, provide info on counseling for PTSD, MST, domestic violence and other mental health conditions. For more information, please call 972.230.9648.

### *Mayor's State of the City (cont. from page one)*

DeSoto's municipal workers are highly sought after and are frequently hired away by other cities in the area. In order to retain their best workers and recruit additional talent, the City Manager's Office commissioned a compensation study to calculate the value of workers in the region so that the City could adjust salary rates and benefits to be more competitive. This included instituting a step plan that allows employees to advance through twelve incremental pay increases toward the midpoint of their salary range, and offering signing incentives to experienced police officers and firefighters looking to serve and protect DeSoto residents.

Another highlight of the Mayor's speech was the creation and subsequent growth of the Hampton Road Economic Development Corridor between Pleasant Run and Belt Line Roads. Current developments include the new Dunkin'/Baskin Robbins quick service restaurant, construction on a 100-bed transitional skilled nursing facility at Hampton and Barrows Place, and upcoming groundbreakings for Fuzzy's Taco Shop just east of Hampton on Pleasant Run and the Smoothie King on the west side of the Hampton and Pleasant Run intersection.

City Manager Dr. Tarron Richardson, speaking on behalf of the City and Chamber of Commerce noted: "These are exciting times for DeSoto because our Hampton Road Redevelopment Corridor Plan allows us to actively eliminate blighted properties and replace them with businesses that will produce precious jobs and provide great services to all of our residents." He added, "We are grateful to all the residents who voted to approve the bond referendum in 2014 to allow us to move this redevelopment corridor forward."

In addition to hosting the State of the City Address, the Chamber enlisted the support of DeSoto merchant, Access Self Storage and Truck Rental to help make the event possible. Linebarger Law Firm also sponsored a networking session for local businesses immediately prior to the Mayor's speech. The City of DeSoto is grateful to the Chamber, Access and Linebarger, and all of the local businesses, leaders and residents for their help with the State of the City Address and for helping to make a daily difference in the life of DeSoto.

The Mayor closed her address by reminding all gathered to save the date of Saturday, March 2, 2019, at 10:00 AM, at the City Hall for a special celebration. The reason? DeSoto turns 70 on that date and a party is in the works.



The Library's Teen Advisory Board continues to grow. The recent "Be Pretty" Teen Girls Mentoring Program was a great success. Also, the Valentine's Day Candy Making program was a big hit. Mr. Eans, the Instructional Chairperson for DeSoto High School's Fine Arts Department, stopped by and made some customized candy and sampled the truffles. He was very impressed with what the Teen Advisory Board is doing and asked to come back to participate in future programs.

### *(cont. from page two)*

and disability, employment, education, legal issues, housing, crisis counseling, transportation needs, and much more.



There is a page on the City's website at [www.desototexas.gov](http://www.desototexas.gov) that links to the 2-1-1 Texas program of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. Just click on E-Services at the top of the City's homepage and look for the Community Resources link.

2-1-1 Texas is committed to helping Texas citizens connect with the services they need. Whether by phone or internet, the goal is to present accurate, well-organized and easy-to-find information from state and local health and human services programs.

In addition to their website, 2-1-1 Texas operates a free, anonymous, social services hotline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year that can be reached by dialing 2-1-1 or 1.877.541.7905.

"I also want to urge social service providers and non-profit organizations in DeSoto to register with 2-1-1 Texas so our residents can be referred to services in their local area," said Proctor.

Information on how to register your non-profit community or social service organization with 2-1-1 Texas is posted on the City's website. Just click on the Community Resources page under E-Services on the homepage at [www.desototexsa.gov](http://www.desototexsa.gov).



RJ & Zydeco Smoove is a smooth, grooving, hard hitting Zydeco band based out of Lafayette, Louisiana, "Ground Zero" for Cajun and Zydeco Music. RJ is one of the younger, newer Creole artist on the "Zydeco Block", but not new to the Zydeco community from Louisiana to Texas. RJ "The Smoove" blends sounds of Neo-Soul, Jazz, R&B, Funk, and Soul Music in with his style of Zydeco to keep the people grooving and dancing all night!

**Free Concert**

Friday, March 22, 2019  
 DeSoto Corner Theatre  
 211 E. Pleasant Run Road  
 DeSoto, TX 75115



*Celebration at City Hall 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon*  
*Activities continue at the Grow DeSoto Market*  
*Place, 324 E. Belt Line Rd. 1:00-4:00 p.m.*

*March 2, 2019 Public Invited FREE*

**Happy 70th Birthday**

DeSoto Mayor, Curtistene S. McCowan and the City Council and members of the DeSoto Historical Foundation invite you to join us at DeSoto City Hall, 211 E. Pleasant Run Road on Saturday, March 2, 2019 at 10 am to celebrate 70 years of progress in DeSoto. We will have history exhibits, a recognition ceremony, and a special storytelling performance of our history written and presented by professional storyteller, Toni Simmons. If you have memorabilia or history items you'd like to share, please contact Kathy Jones at 972.230.9648. The party begins at City Hall at 10 am and continues at the Grow DeSoto Marketplace located at 324 E. Belt Line Road from 1 to 4 pm.

Please mark your calendar and make plans to help us celebrate our birthday, the 70th anniversary of our incorporation as a City. The vote for incorporation took place on March 2, 1949 with 50 people voting in favor and 2 opposed. The vote was entered into the records of the Dallas County Commissioners Court, thereby creating the City of DeSoto. 70 years later, DeSoto is a thriving and vibrant community with more than 53,000 residents.