

February, 2011



www.ci.desoto.tx.us
972.230.9600

City Lights DeSoto, Texas

A publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department



Council Corner - A Message from Sandy Respass, Place 5



Have you noticed that you are paying a little more at the pump these days? Yesterday, when I filled up, regular cost me \$2.96 a gallon (and it could easily be north of \$3.00 a gallon by the time you read this). The cost of just "getting around", that is getting to work, to school, to shop, to visit friends and family, is becoming a bigger part of everyone's budget.

Transportation cost for those of us who drive and transportation availability for those of us who don't, were two of the main reasons your Council started an open dialogue on public transportation about this time last year. We realized that the cost and availability of transportation for our citizens would be major issues in the coming decade, and we were seeking public input to help determine the need and the desire for access to public transportation in DeSoto. Our intent was to use this public input to help us form a long term public transportation policy and plan for the city.

That discussion a year ago yielded a mix of opinions. Many citizens were very much opposed to any form of public transportation while others strongly favored having public transportation available in the city. There were also those in the middle ground that favored some limited form of shuttle or on demand transportation service.

However, almost everyone would agree with the following:

- That the cost of operating the family car(s) is increasing faster than family income.
- That the cost of building and maintaining our road and highway system will require higher taxes.
- That ever greater numbers of seniors, disabled citizens, students, and employees will have few options other than some form of public transportation for their mobility needs.
- And that the City of DeSoto needs a public transportation policy and plan to best serve the future transportation needs of our citizens to keep our city competitive in a reasonable and cost effective manner.

To aid in developing that policy and plan, DeSoto is working with a highly respected local transportation consulting company, Dikita, to provide transportation, economic, and demographic trends data, and transportation needs analysis. This information together

with your input is needed to form a basis of a sound public transportation policy and plan. As part of their work plan, Dikita has provided a web site, www.desototransit.com, which gives a comprehensive picture of the transportation conditions in DeSoto and the surrounding region as well as a complete description of the study and its objectives. In addition the web site contains a citizen survey section where you can express your opinion and have it included in the study.

Your input is a vital part of our decision making process. We on the Council represent your interests, and we need your input to guide us as we move forward to develop a public transportation policy and plan. So please take time to visit the web site and participate in the survey. The greater your participation in the study process, the better the study results will be. Any public transportation policy is more about future needs than present conditions. Let's work together to make sure that what we want for today gives us what we need for tomorrow.

**Sandy Respass,
City Council, Place 4**

Are You Interested In Filing To Run For A Place On The DeSoto City Council?

We are already gearing up for the May 14, 2011 General Election, for which, two positions will be on the ballot - Councilmember Place 2 and Councilmember Place 4. For more information, you may visit our website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us and click "City Hall" and "2011 Election Information" (direct link to page: <http://www.ci.desoto.tx.us/election>). For persons interested in becoming a candidate for either of these positions, you may request a Candidate Guide beginning Friday, February 4th (the request is located on the "2011 Election Information" page on the website). Applications for a position on the ballot will be accepted beginning Monday, February 14th at 8:30 a.m.

For additional information, please contact the Office of the City Secretary at LHallmark@ci.desoto.tx.us or by phoning 972.230.9664.

Did You Know.....

That DeSoto's 911 Call Center offers alarm monitoring? For a one time fee, your residential or commercial alarm can be reprogrammed to be answered directly by Southwest Regional Communication Center (SWRCC), the 911 Call Center for the cities of DeSoto, Cedar Hill and Duncanville. By doing this, you remove one timely step in response by traditional monitoring services who take the call and then must place a call to SWRCC to request dispatch of emergency services.

SWRCC offers alarm monitoring for a traditional phone for a monthly fee of \$25. They also offer cellular backup to your traditional system in case your land line is cut or out of service for \$30 per month and a fully cellular system for \$35. This service is offered on a month to month basis and can be canceled at any time.

If you'd like more information about having your alarm system monitored by SWRCC, please call 972.230.5248 or log on to www.swrcc.net/alarm.

A Message from Animal Control

The City of DeSoto requires all dogs to be restrained at all times, either on a leash, chain or cable, or inside a fence or resident's home. It is illegal to let your dog loose to roam the neighborhood. Dogs running at-large are subject to being impounded by Animal Control at the Tri-City Animal Shelter located at 1150 E. Pleasant Run Road. Owners of impounded animals could receive a citation for violating the city's leash law. The fine for the first impoundment is \$30 and increases up to \$100 for three or more impoundments of the same animal.

All animals redeemed from the Tri-City Animal Shelter will be microchipped at the owner's expense prior to leaving the shelter and must be spayed or neutered within thirty days. The microchipping fee is \$25. The owner must also provide proof of their pet's rabies vaccination within three days of release from the shelter.

Animals running at-large have a much greater chance of being seriously injured or lost. If you have any questions regarding Animal Control, please call 469.658.3075.

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 basic repairs. Eligible projects include fence repair/replacement, mowing and tree trimming, exterior painting, window repair, installation of wheel chair ramps and other minor aesthetic 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 8th through 11th, 2011 but applications for service must be received by April 1st to be considered. 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.



CITY CAENDAR

February

- 1 City Council Meeting - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 3 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - City Hall - 6:30 p.m.
- 3 Library Advisory Board Mtg. - Library Conf. Room - 7 p.m.
- 4 *Flyin' West* by Pearl Cleage opens in Corner Theatre
- 7 Deadline to register for DeSoto Dining & Dialogue, call 972.230.9648 or go to www.desotodd.org
- 7 Park Development Corp. Mtg. - City Hall - 6:30 p.m.
- 7 DeSoto Arts Commission Mtg. - City Hall - 6 p.m.
- 8 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 15 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 19 DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Dinner event
- 20 CDC Gospel Concert - Blue Bonnet Rooms - 4 p.m.
- 22 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 26 HOA Involvement Workshop - City Hall - 9 a.m.
- 28 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - noon

March

- 1 City Council Meeting - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 3 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - City Hall - 6:30 p.m.
- 3 Library Advisory Board Mtg. - Library Conference Room-7 p.m.
- 3 DAC Literary Café - Civic Center - 6:30 p.m. (see ad on pg. 4)
- 6&7 *Broadway Our Way* - Corner Theatre - 7 p.m. (see ad on pg. 4)
- 7 Park Development Corp. Mtg. - City Hall - 6:30 p.m.
- 7 DeSoto Arts Commission Mtg. - City Hall - 6 p.m.
- 8 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 15 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 22 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - City Hall - 7 p.m.
- 24 Board & Commission Banquet - Blue Bonnet Rooms - 6:30 p.m.
- 28 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - noon
- 31 Special Work Session to discuss CIP - City Hall - 6 p.m.



At a recent City Council meeting, Don Dewberry (left) and Gordy VanSteenburg (right) presented a plaque to Flo Bernardo (center) of Twinber Home Health in appreciation of her financial support for the Best Southwest Unified Citizen Corps Council. For info on the BSW CERT program, go to www.cert.bswr.org.

What's New at the DeSoto Public Library?

Now DeSoto Library cardholders and Cedar Hill Library cardholders can have free library cards to check out materials in either library. Although sharing library cards is part of the statewide Texshare program, this new agreement between DeSoto and Cedar Hill includes extra services.

At DeSoto, Cedar Hill cardholders can bring in their valid Cedar Hill library card and current picture ID and receive a free DeSoto library card number if they have no more than \$10 in fines and no overdue, lost, or damaged materials at Cedar Hill. After the initial check out of four items, Cedar Hill residents can check out up to twenty-five items at a time, including ten movies on an adult card and five movies on a juvenile card. Cedar Hill materials may be returned at the DeSoto Library, and those items will be returned to Cedar Hill via courier service.

At Cedar Hill, DeSoto cardholders can bring in their valid DeSoto library card and current picture ID and receive a free Cedar Hill library card number if they have no more than \$5 in fines and no overdue, lost, or damaged materials at DeSoto. DeSoto residents can check out up to fifty items (which can include up to four movies) at a time. Movies can only be checked out on an adult card. DeSoto materials may be returned at the Cedar Hill Library, and these items will be returned to DeSoto via courier service.

Both libraries are excited about this partnership which provides access to additional library materials and services to citizens in both cities. DeSoto and Cedar Hill already share a library catalog, so this improved service is the next step. For more information, please stop by the DeSoto Public Library located at 211 E. Pleasant Run Road in the DeSoto Town Center Complex or call the library at 972.230.9656.

DeSoto Public Library Offers Baby Storytime

Every other Tuesday, beginning February 8, 2011, the DeSoto Public Library will offer Baby Storytime at 10:30 a.m. in the Children's Area of the library. This special storytime is for children newborn to 24 months and their caregivers. Baby Storytime is designed to engage your baby with great books, finger plays and songs to promote pre-literacy skills. For more information, please call the Children's Librarian at 972.230.9666.



African American Genealogy-Connect the Branches of Your Family Tree at the DeSoto Public Library

The DeSoto Public Library invites you to attend a program on African American genealogy on Tuesday, February 15th, at 6 p.m. Lela Evans, a librarian at the University of North Texas Dallas, will present a case study to reveal some of the specialized techniques used to find African American ancestors and family history. Ms. Evans became interested in tracing her family history in high school but became interested in African American research while working as a genealogy librarian. She has spoken at state and national conferences, as well as numerous local genealogy societies. This program is free and open to the public. The library is located at 211 E. Pleasant Run Road, in the DeSoto Town Center. For more information, please call the library's Information Desk at 972.230.9661.

New iPhone Or Android Smart Phone Application Makes Reporting Code Issues Easy

Potholes that need filling, tall grass that needs cutting, or brush that needs removing can now be reported using both the iPhone and the Android smart phone with the launch of the City of DeSoto's new Mobile Action Center.

Smart phone users simply open the application, select an issue, and take a picture – the application knows the exact location and who can fix it. You can now truly connect with someone who can help – on the go and around the clock – without making a trip or phone call to city hall.



The GPS and camera features built into iPhone and Android smart phones make it simple for you to alert DeSoto officials about a variety of issues around the clock while you're mobile. You'll know that your issue went to the right person without ever going to an office or sitting down at a computer, and you can also receive status updates on your issues.

DeSoto is receiving tremendous benefits from mobile technology. This efficiency allows us to serve more requests with fewer people. It saves time and money while improving customer service.

You can download the Android or iPhone application by searching for GOResult in the Market or iTunes, or by going to the DeSoto website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us. There is no charge to download the application.

This smart phone application is a great enhancement to DeSoto's citizen relationship management (CRM) solution from Government Outreach, Inc., a system the city uses to track citizen requests for service. The CRM system is also available for Black Berry and Palm. Blackberry and Palm users simply open a browser and go to <http://user.govoutreach.com/desoto> to access the mobile version. (You will not see this page on your computer.) For assistance, please call 972.230.9696.

Would You Like to Receive Your Utility Bill by E-Mail?

We are all looking for ways to reduce the amount of paper we use in our daily lives and the city's Utility Billing Department is no exception. The staff has received numerous requests from customers who would like to receive their utility bill in the form of an e-mail rather than a paper document. As a result, a process has been developed to offer e-billing. Customers now have the option of receiving an e-bill only, an e-bill and a paper bill, or a paper bill only. To begin receiving e-bills, please log on to www.ci.desoto.tx.us/ebill and fill out the e-bill registration form.

Once you go "paperless" for your utility bill, you won't receive a paper copy of this newsletter. You can, however, receive an e-mail notification or text message each time a new edition of the City Lights Newsletter is posted to the city's website. Just go to the city's home page at www.ci.desoto.tx.us and look for the blue Notify Me button on the left hand side. Click here and it will take you to a list of items for which you can sign up to receive an e-mail or text notification. This list includes the City Lights Newsletter, information about trash collection, city job postings, activities in the Corner Theatre and much more. All you need to do is enter your e-mail address or phone number and click on the items you'd like to receive.

Give Us Your Saturday Morning and We'll Help You Improve Your Neighborhood

Calling all HOA members. Join us for the sixth annual HOA Involvement Workshop on Saturday, February 26th from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at City Hall. Information is a key element in effective neighborhood involvement and this workshop is designed to provide representatives from DeSoto's neighborhood and homeowners associations with the information they need to make their neighborhood a better, safer place to live. Consisting of two general sessions, this free workshop will provide information on topics of interest to our residents such as the renewal of the city's sanitation contract, the city's alarm monitoring program, and neighborhood safety. Members of all registered DeSoto homeowner's associations are encouraged to attend whether your association is new or well-established. You are also urged to attend if you are considering starting an association in your neighborhood.

To register or for more information, please call Tracie Hlavinka at 972.230.9689 or by e-mail at thlavinka@ci.desoto.tx.us.



Thursday, March 3, 2011
DeSoto Civic Center, 211 E. Pleasant Run Road
Tour of the DeSoto Library at 5:30 p.m.
Café begins in the Blue Bonnet Rooms at 6:30 p.m.

The DeSoto Arts Commission invites you to an 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. There's no admission fee, but bring your check book as some authors will have their works for sale.

The Gospel According to John & The Gospel According to Jessica
 presented by the Crosswise Players
 March 11, 12th at the
 DeSoto Corner Theatre
 For tickets go to www.crosswiseplayers.com

The DeSoto Arts Commission knows that DeSoto's Got Talent so they are looking for contestants to compete in:

DeSoto Star Search
Saturday, April 24th
DeSoto Corner Theatre

Can you sing, dance, or tell jokes? Do you love to perform? If so, the DeSoto Arts Commission is holding open auditions for DeSoto Star Search, our annual, just for fun talent show, on Saturday, April 16, 2011. If you are between the ages of 4 and 104 and have a talent you'd like to share, call 972.230.9648 to schedule an audition time.

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FLYIN' WEST

A gripping and inspirational story starring **IRMA P. HALL**

FEBRUARY 4-27, 2011

PREVIEW SHOW: FEB. 3, 2011 @ 7:30pm, \$10
 FRIDAY & SATURDAY @ 7:30 PM, \$20
 SATURDAY & SUNDAY @ 2:30 PM, \$15

THE CORNER THEATRE CITY OF DESOTO, TEXAS
 211 E. Pleasant Run | DeSoto, TX 75115

DESOTO ARTS COMMISSION PRESENTS

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A TRIBUTE TO THE PAST AND A SALUTE TO THE FUTURE

Come and join us as we revisit some of Broadway's most beloved songs from the past, and salute some of the most popular music of today. With an all-star cast of professional singers, actors and dancers, this show is sure to leave you wanting more!

GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY!
ONLY 2 SHOWS!

THE CORNER THEATRE
MARCH 6 - MARCH 7, 2011
GENERAL SEATING - \$10.00
SPECIAL ON STAGE SEATING - \$25.00

Sunday, March 6th, 2011 | 7:00
 Monday, March 7th, 2011 | 7:00

FOR TICKETS, VISIT WWW.DESOTOARTSCOMMISSION.COM Or call 972.230.9648

WWW.DESOTOARTSCOMMISSION.COM
 THE CORNER THEATRE :: 211 E. PLEASANT RUN RD. :: DESOTO, TEXAS 75115

Concerned DeSoto Citizens

Presents our 13th Annual

Gospel Fest

Featuring Fort Worth's Anointed Singing Sensations

Just Us

With the DeSoto High School Choir
 and Rachel Webb

Sunday, February 20th

4:00 p.m. in the DeSoto Civic Center Blue Bonnet Rooms

Tickets are \$10 and proceeds benefit the CDC Scholarship Fund for DeSoto High School Seniors

For Tickets or more information, contact CDC at 972-230-4243 or CDDeSoto@yahoo.com

Funded in part by grant from the DeSoto Arts Commission